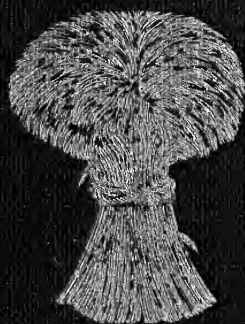


THE HARVEST HOME



◇ James B. Kenyon



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THE HARVEST HOME

*The day is done, its toil, its weariness;
The long-delaying evening now has come,
With dusk and silence and cool dews that bless,
With shorn gray uplands—and the harvest home.*

Five hundred and fifty-five copies
of this book have been printed from
type and the type distributed; this
copy is No.....39.....

James B. Kenyon.

The Harvest Home

COLLECTED POEMS

of

JAMES B. KENYON

JAMES T. WHITE & CO.
NEW YORK

1920

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BOOKS BY MR. KENYON

PROSE

LOITERINGS IN OLD FIELDS
REMEMBERED DAYS
RETRIBUTION

VERSE

THE FALLEN AND OTHER POEMS
OUT OF THE SHADOWS
SONGS IN ALL SEASONS
IN REALMS OF GOLD
AT THE GATE OF DREAMS
AN OATEN PIPE
A LITTLE BOOK OF LULLABIES

POEMS

REED VOICES

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AT THE GATE OF DREAMS

*There wrinkled age and rosy childhood meet;
There strange stars silver night's mysterious streams;
There wayworn mortals come with weary feet,
And drop their burdens at the Gate of Dreams.*

A VISION OF ELD

HOW have the swift-winged centuries sped!
What unguessed circuits time hath run!
Yet, though uncounted years are dead,
Shines on the same clear sun.

I see once more the vaulted aisles
That pierce the dim and claustral wood;
Again the pomp of summer smiles
O'er all the solitude.

Light breezes from the mountain side
Bring bell-like bayings of the hounds;
While slim ears, round the forest wide,
Leap at the vibrant sounds.

Amid the trees gay pennons gleam;
And, hark! from soft-curved, supple throats,
Heard silverly as in a dream,
A peal of joy out floats.

There sweeps the stately cavalcade;
The high-born dames, the knightly men,
With whip and spur prick through the glade—
I see them all again.

I see the proudly tossing plume;
The glittering casque, the ribboned spear,
And, riding through the fragrant gloom,
Launcelot and Guinevere.

And where yon dusky branches spread
Above the queen's deep-shadowed eyes,
Sir Launcelot, with low-bent head,
Hears Guinevere's replies.

A QUEST

SOMEWHERE, afar, I know it lies—
The spot ne'er seen of human eyes:
There all day long the shadows sleep
In woven grasses, cool and deep;
There o'er its shallows slants a stream
In which the rushes dip and dream;
All day to some tall reed there clings
The dragon-fly with moveless wings;
No bird-note wakes the slumbering air;
No piping insects revel there;
Within that quiet nook the breeze
Scarce lifts the leaves upon the trees.
It is the haunt where Peace abides,
Shy Peace that ever flees and hides
Before man's sad and weary face.
Ah, should I find her secret place,
And steal upon her silently,
Or e'er her timid feet could flee,
Might I not seize and hold her well,
And bring her captive where men dwell?

REAPING

A LONG the east strange glories burn,
And kindling lights leap high and higher,
As morning from her azure urn
Pours forth her golden fire.

From rush and reed, from bush and brake,
Float countless jeweled gossamers,
That glance and dazzle as they shake
In every breeze that stirs.

A bird, upspringing from the grain,
Flutes loud and clear his raptured note,
That mingles with as blithe a strain
As e'er thrilled human throat.

Amid the tasseled ranks of corn
She stands breast-high; her arms are bare;
And round her warm brown neck the morn
Gleams on her lustrous hair.

The sickle flashes in her hand;
The dew laves both her naked feet;
She reaps and sings, and through the land
She sends her carols sweet.

The wind breathes softly on her brow;
To touch her lips tall blossoms seek;
And as the stricken columns bow,
They kiss her glowing cheek.

O happy maiden! in her breast
Guile has no place; her virgin sleep
Vain thoughts ne'er trouble; she is blest;
She has no tears to weep.

She knows nor longs for prouder things;
Her simple tasks are all her care;
She lives and loves, and reaps and sings,
And makes the world more fair.

THE ROBBER

AY, he hath stolen her sweets and gone;
The robber bee, upon his quest
For honeyed booty, from the breast
Of yon fair lily now hath flown.
In vain the south-wind wooes;
In vain the ring dove cooes;
Like unto some pale maid,
The lily stands betrayed.
Her nectared bosom pillaged and undone.

Ah! sad so white a breast should lie,
With all its stores of virgin sweet,
Thus to be prey for plundering feet,
And spoil for any wanton eye!
Yet many a bosom chaste
Hath been by love laid waste—
Light love that came and went,
And left a life forspent
Beneath a far, serene, and mocking sky.

BELATED

HERE through years she dwelt apart;
Still I see her, as of old;
Round her swallows wheel and dart,
Summer spreads its cloth of gold.

Droning bees in dew-wet flowers,
Ploughmen shouting to their teams,
Whisperings of fragrant showers—
All are mingled with her dreams.

Backward roll the cloudy years;
Other scenes before her rise;
Other sounds are in her ears;
Other suns climb other skies.

She, a damsel sore distressed,
From her ivied casement high
Leans with dolor-stricken breast,
Watching with a haggard eye;

Till, through mists that blur her sight,
Pricking o'er the wide campaign,
She beholds her proud young knight
Leading up his bannered train.

And she knows the hour is near
When, beyond that prisoning wall,
She shall vanish without fear—
Borne afar, love's happy thrall.

Or, through fields with daisies pied,
Hooded falcon on her wrist,
Slim hound frisking at her side,
Forth she fares to keep her tryst.

There where immemorial trees
Lift gnarled boughs to sun and rain,
Mid bird-haunted privacies,
Lives the old sweet tale again.

Thus, while tongues still clashed and strove,
And joy withered at a breath,
Her unaging spirit wove
Rainbows o'er the gulfs of death.

Gentle dreamer! soul of snow!
Out of place and season born,
Hither come—how, none may know—
Wandering from some earlier morn,

Teach us, though the world be wide,
And life miss its high emprise,
That the heart, whate'er betide,
Still may find its Paradise.

THE HARPSICHORD

(In the Metropolitan Museum)

THE hands that swept these keys—where are they
now?

And the old melodies,
Like winds that once sang through some leafy bough
Beneath the summer skies?

O vision of delight!—each slender throat,

White as the snowy swan,
And airy feet that through the dances float

As floats the sapphire dawn
Above the hilltops when the day is near—

I see them all again
Moving beneath the tapers, and I hear

Each mounting, passionate strain
That set young bosoms pulsing, long ago

When life and love were new,
Till 'mid the dim stars paled the spent moon's bow
O'er meadows gray with dew.

Ah, the dear eyes that with strange witch fires glowed
Long since to earth were closed:

The lips that all their pearly treasures showed
Have many years reposed,

In that strait house where night and silence dwell,
Unvexed by doubt or dream;

Yet deathless youth still weaves its world-old spell,
Love breathes its ancient theme.

THE REVELER

"O graceful Amaryllis,—regard, I pray you, my heart-grieving pain. I would I could become your bussing bee, and so enter into your cave, penetrating the ivy and the ferns, with which you are covered in."—Theocritus, "Idyl III."

HE shrilled his fife and woke my dream;
I heard his music clear and thin;
And then I found beside the stream
The flower-bell that he reveled in.

The clouds were floating high and white;
A laggard breeze began to play;
Along the bank-side poured the light
From out the lavish heart of day.

I knew that where the nectar pressed
Up from the blossom's perfumed cell,
There I should find the tipsy guest,
His pining drowned in hydromel.

O wassailer of the summer's prime!
Gone are the goatherds from the plain;
Across the fields of purple thyme
The yellow sunlight streams in vain.

Drink to thy lover's memory;
Theocritus is in his grave
Beneath the far Sicilian sky,
And by the murmuring, sun-kissed wave.

A MAID OF YESTERDAY

DOWN this pathway, through the shade,
Lightly tripped the dainty maid,
In her eyes the smile of June,
On her lips some old sweet tune.
Through yon ragged rows of box,
By that awkward clump of phlox,
To her favorite pansy bed,
Like a ray of light, she sped.
Satin slippers, trim and neat,
Gleamed upon her slender feet;
Round her ankles, deftly tied,
Ribbons crossed from side to side.
Here her pinks, old-fashioned, fair,
Breathed their fragrance on the air
There her fluttering azure gown
Shook the poppy's petals down.
Here a rose, with fond caress,
Stooped to touch a truant tress,
From her fillet struggling free,
Scorning its captivity.
There a bed of rue was set
With an edge of mignonette,
And the spicy bergamot
Meshed the frail forget-me-not.
Honeysuckles, hollyhocks,
Bachelor's buttons, four-o'clocks,

Marigolds and blue-eyed grass
Curt'sied when the maid did pass.
Now the braggart weeds have spread
Through the paths she loved to tread,
And the creeping moss has grown
O'er yon shattered dial-stone.
Still beside the ruined walks
Some old flowers, on sturdy stalks,
Dream of her whose happy eyes
Roam the fields of Paradise.

THE RACERS

TIME at my elbow plucks me sore;
Yet I'll not slack my pace to hear
The one sad word which, o'er and o'er,
He whispers in my ear.

Upon my hair he dusts his rime;
I shake my head full laughingly,
For howsoever fleet be Time,
He shall not outstrip me.

IN THE ORCHARD

THE autumn leaves are whirled away,
The sober skies look down
On faded fields and woodlands gray,
And the dun-colored town.

Through the brown orchard's gusty aisle,
In sad-hued gown and hood,
Slow passes, with a peaceful smile,
A maiden pure and good.

Her deep, serene and dove-like eyes
Are downward bent, her face,
Whereon the day's pale shadow lies,
Is sweet with nameless grace.

The frolic wind beside her blows,
The sear leaves dance and leap;
With hands before her clasped, she goes
As in a waking sleep.

To her the ashen skies are bright,
The russet earth is fair;
And never shone a clearer light,
Nor breathed a softer air.

O wizard love! whose magic art
Transmutes to sun the shade,
Thine are the beams that fill the heart
Of this meek Quaker maid.

A SONG OF THE IDEAL

O FACE I never saw,
That still I seek
By shadows of the shaw,
By reed-grown creek;
Through many a fern-deep hollow,
And morn-lit mead,
I follow still and follow
Where thou dost lead.

Where beaded gossamers
Like rainbows change
With every breeze that stirs;
Where wild things range
Wild ways with shy, light feet,
Through woodland dew,
Thee, O unseen and fleet,
I still pursue.

Where winter, heap by heap,
Chokes leafless dells,
And unleashed ice-blasts sweep
O'er fields and fells;
Where shivering shrubs uplift
Hands pale and gaunt,
Through many an unsunned drift
I seek thy haunt.

Where torrents from the height
 Pour down their streams;
Where in the wavering light
 The dark pine dreams;
Where angry storm-winds beat
 And lightnings play,
I seek thy flying feet
 Day after day.

Sometimes by silvern strands,
 When sea-winds sleep,
And up the crinkling sands
 The thin waves creep,
When misty twilight falls
 And night is near,
Then from the sea's deep halls
 Thy voice I hear.

Thou of the sun-bright head,
 Hide not thy face;
Cloud-light thy breezy tread,
 Cloud-like thy grace.
O whither dost thou flee?
 Where wilt thou rest?
Still must I follow thee,
 Blest or unblest.

THE SLEEPERS

DO they whisper in the dark,
And to one another call
Through the perfumed hush, nor mark
Time's remote processional?

Wrapt in silence, do they hear
Green things growing overhead—
Silver tinklings, thin and clear,
Where the brook slants o'er its bed?

Do they never seek to rise
From the clods 'about them pressed,
Love's old hunger in their eyes,
Love's old ardors in their breast?

When each new spring brings again
Gush of song and flush of bloom,
And the warm breath of the rain
Blown through aisles of verdurous gloom—

When the twilights ebb and flow,
And through evening dews and musk
Violet shadows come and go
Round young lovers in the dusk—

Feel they not the kindling blood
In their dead veins stir and leap,
And old longings, like a flood,
Through their troubled quiet sweep?

Or, when winter days are drear,
And o'er many a sparkling roof
Curls the smoke of household cheer,
Of love's vestal flame the proof—

When through purple shades of night,
Past the wind-swept, snowy wood,
Winks the watched-for windowed light,
Star of love's solicitude—

Then do rumors and desires,
Borne through death's unsunned eclipse,
In them wake the ancient fires?
Dreams of lips upon their lips?

Groping touch of babes that roves
O'er the bosom's throbbing swell?
Children's laughter in the groves?
Twinkling footsteps in the dell?

All the fond, far plaintive things
Vanished with the vanished years—
Bring these no dear comfortings?
In the dust no healing tears?

And when summer days are long,
And the bees drone in the flowers,
And the pewits lift their song,
Iterant through sunlit hours;

From the mossy woodpaths where,
Youth pursued, 'mid trailing boughs,
Rosy shapes with streaming hair
Sidewise blown from ivory brows;

See they not in signals mute
Lifted hands that gleam and wave,
While the riotous currents shoot
Through the frost-bands of the grave?

Barefoot milkmaids as they pass
Singing to the vocal morn;
Shining fruit in orchard grass;
Sickles flashing 'mid the corn;

Yule-logs blazing on the hearth;
Smiles and kindly speech of men;
All the homely ways of earth—
Yearn they not for these again?

Or, pavilioned round with sleep,
Missing naught that they forego,
Do they lie content to keep
Secrets that we do not know?

THE TRUANT

O COME from out the shining mists, child of
the long-ago,
Come with the songs of vanished birds and comrade
streams that flow;
Come with the balmy airs that breathe from skies of
cloudless blue,
Come with the perfume of the rose, wet by the early
dew.

Come back, O child of summers gone, come with the
cool, clear morn,
With swallows twittering at the eaves above the
tasseled corn;
O fair-haired boyish wanderer, heart-high in meadow-
sweet,
Come from the dreamlands where so long have roamed
your happy feet.

Bring back the old delight in life, the freshness of the
world,
The azure banners that the spring about the pools
unfurled,
The buttercups and daisies, and the clover by the
wood,
The yellow-belted bee within the poppy's silken hood.

O touch the eyes so weary grown, and touch the frosted
hair,
And from the troubled bosom lift its leaden weight of
care;
O darling rover, from the golden mists of memory,
Emerge one little hour and so restore my youth to me.

WE WILL KEEP OUR DREAMS

OUR dreams—nay, soul, we will not let them go;
What though the braggart world scoff and deny,
And pygmies in the market strive and cry,
As emmet-like they hurry to and fro?
The bright hours lessen, and the shadows grow,
But we will seek the silence, thou and I,
Content, while fame and treasure pass us by,
To rove through quiet coverts that we know.
Yea, we will hearken to the wordless speech
Of opening buds beneath the vernal showers;
To us the morn its dewy lore shall teach,
The evening whisper o'er its sleeping flowers;
And secrets the stars utter, each to each,
Shall breathe of Peace 'mid her immortal bowers.

THE OLD PATH

THIS is the path she used to know ;
Still by yon ruined wall
The violets and wild roses grow,
And sparrows build and call.

Here barefoot towards the pasture-land
She lightly tripped along,
A dewy blossom in her hand,
Upon her lips a song.

I see again her soft white throat
Swell like a warbling bird's ;
The clear air thrills, as through it float
The old familiar words.

And now she stands beside the bar,
And where her cattle roam,
Knee-deep in grassy dells afar,
They hear and hasten home.

O sunny locks and eyes of blue,
And face like morning skies,
And tender lips whereon the dew
As on a flower lies—

Shall I not see her as of yore?
And if, when night is done,
I linger as I did before,
Here where the roses run,

Shall I not hear her as she goes,
Nor see her garments wave?
Ah, no! in yon neglected close
There lies her moss-grown grave.

HEIMWEH

AH, could it be once more ere life's wan close!—
That I might climb the long ancestral hill
Where the smooth slope dips to the shattered mill,
And the shrunk brook amid its alders flows;
Feel the soft wind that down the valley blows;
Hear in the dewy hush the whip-poor-will
Thresh the gray silence, and through evening's chill
Breathe once again the scent of thyme and rose:
Then would great peace flood all my avid breast;
Welcome would be the dusk of twilight skies;
And as a late bird hastens to her nest
Through deepening gloom with little happy cries,
So should I seek the covert of my rest,
And give to death my sleep-consenting eyes.

THE DESERTED GARDEN

HITHER like ghosts old memories steal;
Here Time forgets his idle glass;
About the crumbling borders wheel
The flickering shadows o'er the grass.

Forget-me-nots with eyes of blue,
Myrtle and thyme and mignonette,
Iris and lavender and rue,
'Mid alien brambles linger yet.

There where the clustered rowans brood
Glimmers the firefly's vagrant spark,
And in the unfretted solitude
The fountain murmurs through the dark.

Yon mossy dial still weds the hours;
Light feet that thither used to run
Now brush the dew from other flowers
That smile beneath no earthly sun.

Ah, slender world of lost delights! .
Sweet privacies, communions dear,
Shy whispers in the velvet nights—
What happy love once haunted here!

And still about the mouldering place
Linger the gentle presences—
Fair phantoms, each with girlish face,
Gliding beneath the wistful trees.

Yet even here 'mid ruined walks,
And growths that clog the dwindling stream,
And blooms decaying on their stalks,
The heart renews the deathless dream.

Somewhere beneath a dappled sky,
On green slopes pied with autumn's gold,
While flocks, unfearing, wander nigh,
Once more the ancient tale is told.

Afar a swart-armed reaper sings;
Nearer, adown the hollow vale,
The music of an anvil rings
O'er the dull throbbing of a flail.

And where the river's sinuous tide,
Dimpling among its sedges, flows,
With wicker creel against his side,
Homeward a loitering fisher goes.

So, while the season weaves its spell,
And evening sows its early dew,
Love's troth is plighted; all is well;
And nature keeps her purpose true.

A PLEA TO TIME

TAKE, oh, take thy tribute, Time:
On my forehead sift thy rime;

Bear me downward, if thou must,
Slowly toward my kindred dust.

Clog with age each trembling limb;
Press mine eyes till they be dim;

Touch my brow with magic staff,
Scoring there thine epigraph;

As thou wilt, mar form or face,
Only grant a single grace:

From thine ever-mining tooth
Spare, oh, spare the heart of youth.

Let the song of Spring's first bird
With the old delight be heard.

Still the early rose be sweet,
While the summers by me fleet.

Let the sound of rain-wet leaves
Whispering round the dripping eaves.

Winds amid the growing corn,
Voices of the breathing morn,

And the ever-vocal grass,
Sweeter be as seasons pass.

So from nature's gentle heart
Let me never, never part;

Let me take my final rest
In her cool and peaceful breast.

PETRONIUS ARBITER

PETRONIUS, how the years have sped!
Gone are the laughing lips and eyes
Thou knew'st of yore, and round thy head
Thickly the passing centuries
Have wrapped the silence and the dust,
Since thou didst snap life's brittle ties,
Sated with weariness and disgust.

The world its hollow laughter keeps,
Its bootless strife, its wintry pain,
Its sunless lairs where evil sleeps,
Its clouded eyes that watch in vain;
Yet somewhere there's an infant's smile,
A maid's soft "yes," a slave's rent chain
Proves life hath something still worth while.

HYLAS AND HERCULES

In sooth the boy was holding over the fountain an urn that might contain a copious draught, hastening to plunge it; when they all clung to his hands; for love for the Argive boy had encircled the tender hearts of them all; and he fell sheer into the black water, like as when a ruddy star hath fallen from the sky sheer into the sea. . . . The Nymphs indeed holding on their knees the weeping boy, began to console him with gentle words; whilst the son of Amphitryon, disturbed about the lad, went, with his well-bent bow and arrows after the Scythian fashion, and the club which his right hand ever used to hold. Thrice indeed he shouted Hylas to the full depth of his throat, and thrice, I wot, the boy heard and a thin voice came from the water; but though very near he seemed to be afar off.—Theocritus, Idyl XIII., translation of J. Banks.

DOWN the aisle he singing goes
Where the gurgling water flows,
Where the swaying rushes are,
In his arms the brazen jar.
Never yet was boy so fair:
Swallow-wort and maiden-hair,
Parsley-bloom and green couch-grass,
Kiss his white feet as they pass.
Now he bends above the tide
Mirror-clear from side to side,
Drops upon his glowing knees,
And his own bright image sees.

O how placid is the pool!
O how sweet the waters cool!
Ah, how good it were to rest
In the fountain's flowing breast,
Nevermore to rise and dip
With the wandering, brine-blanced ship.
Hark! they call him from the strand;
So he thrusts with eager hand,
Through the water-weeds and fern,
In the wave his bubbling urn.
Lo, before his witch'd eyes
Ivory bosoms flash and rise,
Faces sweeter than a dream
Smile upon him from the stream,
And soft fingers, light as mist,
Twine about his yielding wrist.
Slowly, slowly downward sink,
Lower than the spring's green brink,
To the fountain's pebbly bed,
Wondering eyes and shining head.

* * * * *

"Hylas! Hylas!" rings the cry
Through the woodland mournfully,
Ever startling beast and bird,
Though no boyish shout be heard
Answering him whose weary quest
Drives him onward without rest,
Up and down this alien coast,
Seeking still the loved and lost.

Vain thy search, O hapless one,
Sad son of Amphitryon,
For the lad shall nevermore
Greet thee on a mortal shore.

THE UNSEEN WORLD

WE never dreamed it was so near,
And yet we might have known,
Had we surmised from what bright sphere
The viewless wings had flown,
Or seen above her cradled head
A mist-like, shining halo spread.

But round her pillowed helplessness
Some wistful influence
Wove its soft spell, nor could we guess
What beckonings lured her hence,
Till through the fond, enfolding skies
She vanished back to Paradise.

THE TURNING OF THE ROAD

THE day and the season call me, and all my blood
is stirred,
For kindling ardors mount and strive, and morn-
ing's glory burns,
Along the footpaths where of old the autumn crickets
chirred
And winter's drifts heaped hill and hollow, where
the long road turns.

O happy are the southwinds, and happy are the streams,
And with the gold of cowslips all the meadows are
ablaze,
While over fields and woodlands break a thousand
flying gleams,
And faery feet go twinkling down the green un-
trodden ways.

Beyond the turning of the road the silvery clematis,
Wild grape and jewelled columbine uplift a purpled
screen;
And there it waits for me at last—the fate I shall not
miss,
The voice that I have never heard, the face I have
not seen.

Somewhere it waits me still, there at the turning of
the road,

Love with the laughing rosy lips, pain with the
clouded eyes,

Shy fortune with her brimming horn, age spent be-
neath its load—

I reckon not which, for in my heart the young spring
calls and cries.

CHANSON DU MATIN

MORNING, morning everywhere!

Morning on the misty wood,

Morning on the gleaming flood,

Morning on the drowsy street,

Morning o'er the meadows sweet;

Skies are fresh and earth is fair;

Morning, morning everywhere!

Music, music everywhere!

Sad the watches of the night;

Glad the coming of the light;

Now a thousand voices wake,

Now a thousand bosoms shake;

Hope dawns in the eyes of care;

Music, music everywhere!

TWILIGHT AND MUSIC

SHE ran her fingers o'er the ivory keys,
And shook a prelude from them as a bird
Shakes from its throat a song.

Then from a mist
Of fluctuant melody I saw arise
Green slopes descending to a murmuring sea;
A conscious heaven, like a love-wreathed face,
Smilingly brooded o'er the raptured earth;
Cool waters took the light from marge to marge,
Doubling the sky, the trees, the fir-fledged shores,
With tremulous joy in their inverted world.
I heard beneath the deepening rose of dawn
The first clear flutings of a dew-wet throat
Where from some claustral dell, faint as a dream,
Floated the breath of waking violets.

The music changed: she the enchantress sat
With white neck glimmering where the tresses fine
Flowed ripplingly about her, and her head,
Poised like a lily, delicately drooped
Above the nimble hands that wrought the charm.
Now Spring passed through the orchards, naked boughs
Were clothed with beauty, love-forsaken paths

Grew vocal with the bliss of nesting-time,
And where her light feet fell the crocus flamed.
The secret fires that in the dark had burned
Beneath the sod through Winter's frozen hours
Shot up in spires of grass and curling ferns,
While warm airs, balmy as the lids of sleep,
Lifted the cowslip by gnat-haunted fens.
A myriad jocund sounds from near and far
Commingled—the shrill challenge of the cock,
The plowman shouting to his team afield,
The clang of smitten anvils, droning bees,
And sparrows twittering round the moss-grown eaves.

Again the music changed: a crash of notes,
Loud, stridulous, confused upon the ear,
Startled the beauteous vision into flight.
Through slanted rain I saw the shivering trees,
Lashed by a tempest, stoop their suppliant heads,
While through the murky air the tortured leaves
Went whirling down the blast. Black rolling clouds,
Portentous, huge, and crammed with fiery bolts
Sent sudden warnings forth with peal on peal
Of awful detonation. Pleasant bowers,
Sweet with the whisperings of old tender tales
In long forgotten Junes, now stripped and frayed,
Stared sadly round the ruined borders where
The broken, drenched, wind-beaten blossoms lay.
Then sullenly behind the bastioned hills
Sank the maned thunder-heads with muffled growls,
The sun laughed out from vapors of pearl and gold,
And earth breathed peace once more.

Her smooth young cheek,
Flushed with the hues of health, in purest curves
Leaned sidewise, and the lashes downward dropped
Curtained the inward glow of her chaste eyes.
Then for an instant on the twilight fell
A silence, while her fluttering hands were stayed
Above the expectant keys; till one by one,
Low mournful notes crept out upon the dusk,
And autumn winds sobbed round the barren fields,
And rustled in the melancholy aisles
Of desolate woodlands. By leaf-smothered streams
Swayed withered stalks that in the Summer's prime,
Fanned softly by the night-moth's venturous wings,
Had caught in fragrant urns the starry dews,
And spilt fine incense on the enamored air.
Slowly from out the shadows drew a shape
Which, thin and indeterminate in the gloom,
Melted and grew again upon my sight,
When like a balefire wavered into form
A death's head crowned with myrtle.

The pale night
Closed in at length, and through the dark I heard
A sound of cradled waters; far away
Tolled solemnly a bell; a requiem
Chanted by hollow voices, rose and fell,
Ever approaching, ever receding still;
Cressets whose flames flared backward dipped and
tossed,
As if o'er rugged ways by careless hands

Borne onward round a bier. Then at my feet,
On the dim verge forlorn and unexplored,
The languid waves pulsed softly; winds blew chill,
And I awoke to see her upturned face,
Smiling and lovely, as the music died.

THE VIEWPOINT

NOW the cool breath of waking violets
Steals from dim nooks amid the ancient trees
Where midges wind their slender clarinets,
Hour after hour, in elfin symphonies.

One bell-like note, from some elusive spray,
Within the shelter of its leafy screen,
Falls as a benediction on the day,
Borne down cathedral aisles of living green.

Ah, haply, somewhere on the springtime skies,
Through curtains swaying to the sun kissed air,
A sufferer looks with pain bewildered eyes,
And wonders that the world should be so fair.

PERPETUA

PERPETUA, what still remains
Of thee, fair maiden? With the grains
Of amber wheat, all unafraid,
In fragrant darkness thou wast laid.
And yet that radiant loveliness
Blooms somewhere sweetly still to bless
Time's desert paths; thine April eyes
In beauty match eve's violet skies,
While round thy roseleaf lips the light
Dimples in smiles than dawn more bright.
Some wizard, chill, compelling love
A subtle weird about thee wove,
With hushed fond whisperings of rest
Breathed softly through thy snow-pure breast;
Then thou didst haste, ere youth was fled,
To make with death thy bridal bed.
But thou has not vanished quite,
For still the heart's tear-cleanséd sight
Beholds thee in morn's streaming rays,
And in the woodland's mossy ways,
In grass, in flowers, in gurgling springs,
In stars, in clouds, in wingéd things
Born of the day; thy lyric voice
Is breathed through all things that rejoice:
Nay, while thou liv'st in earth and sky,
Perpetua, thou canst not die.

A BREATH OF VIOLETS

(In the City)

A BREATH faint as a dream—then flashed this
scene

Upon his inward vision: a clear rill
Sparkling amid its sallows; tender green
Of spring time meadows; light upon the hill;
And barefoot sunbrowned lads that blithely pass
'Mid dim sweet dewes still quickening in the grass.

Around him rise the clamors of the mart;

He hears them not;—above an emerald bank
The swallows skim; once more, with eager heart,

He hastes where shy cool-rooted violets prank
The brookside, each a pale and hooded nun
Hiding her virgin forehead from the sun.

Flushed cheeks and wind-tossed hair, and morning's gold

On hill and hollow; for a brief glad space
He sees them all—till once again are rolled

O'er him the city's tides; before his face
A harsh-voiced squalid flower vender stands
With violets in his soiled, importunate hands.

PLAYMATES

WHERE the willows dip and dream
By the iris bordered stream,
Long ago we sat and played,
Barefoot lad and nut brown maid.

Idly poised the dragonfly
On an arrow arum nigh,
While the summer's sunlit skies
Smiled within her azure eyes.

Oft she caught, on each small hand,
The "cat's cradle," where it spanned
'Twixt my palms the narrow space,
Bending down her eager face.

Sometimes in the twilight hush
From the wood the hermit thrush
Sent his bell-like vesper call
Through the dusk of evenfall.

Ah, the days of long ago!
Still the dimpling waters flow;
Still beside the quiet stream
The gray willows dip and dream.

* * * * *

Oh, my little playmate, gone
With the freshness of life's dawn,
With its dews and faery gold,
And its wonders manifold!

Yesterday our casual feet
Met within the crowded street,
But I saw no greeting rise
In your unremembering eyes.

THE BIBLIOPHILE

WHAT does he dream there at the dusty stall,
Rapt like a lover waiting to keep tryst?
Wide intervals, with cool and verdurous slopes,
Far-gleaming waters, sudden flight of birds,
And cloudy lilacs swaying at the gate—
Fill these the orbit of his inward vision?
Nay, eagerly yet gently, one by one,
Pondering he turns each frayed and time-stained leaf,
Jealously scans the vellum worn and old,
The while in formless folds his garments hang
Loosely on his shrunk frame, and his lips move
As though he conned a lesson o'er and o'er.
One hope up-buoys him—that on some rare day,
Some fortunate great day, his hands shall find,
Carelessly jostled by its meaner fellows,
And hidden like a jewel in a dust-heap,
The ancient tome for which he long has sought,
The wished-for darling of his dotting heart.

HOME AT EVENING-TIME

UP through the purple gloaming floats the tinkling
of her bell;
She's crossing now the brook that gurgles down yon
grassy dell;
For wheresoe'er 'mid woodlands dim or meadows she
may roam,
At milking-time with lowings soft the evening brings
her home.

Where huddled sheep by pasture-bars lift many a
plaintive bleat,
Along the leaf-embowered lanes, with twinklings of
bare feet,
'Mid daisies gleaming on the sward like glimmering
flecks of foam,
The children all come trooping back, for evening brings
them home.

Ah, when for me the day is done, and falls the twi-
light's hush,
And from each sapphire peak dissolves the sunset's
lingering flush—
When one by one the slow stars kindle in night's
shadowy dome,
Then from my life's long wanderings may evening
bring me home.

A QUAKER MAID

SHE sits beneath the trellised vine
Beside the open door;
Warm arabesques of sunlight shine
Along the checkered floor.

Her busy needles wink and glance
As still her task she plies;
By bordered walks the midges dance;
Above, the swallow flies.

Her face is calm; her eyes are meek;
About her smooth young throat,
And lightly blown o'er either cheek,
The silken tendrils float.

Beneath the snow-white kerchief spread
Across her placid breast,
Unvexed by change or darkling dread,
Her spirit lies at rest.

Peace is her world; no thought of ill,
Nor breath of sordid strife,
E'er taints the pure desires that fill
Her cool hushed round of life.

Afar the city roars; there sweeps
The long white way that gleams
For other feet; she sits and keeps
Alone her quiet dreams.

THE BROOKSIDE

PAST the green fields and the wood,
Slipping down o'er silver sands,
Hourly hastes the mimic flood
To the osiered marish lands.

Tenuous treble, faint bassoon,
All day long its strains are heard,
Dreamlike, far—an elfin tune
Set to voice of wind and bird.

When the brooding night is still,
And the moonlight o'er the grass
Steals like mist from hill to hill,
Furtive creatures come and pass.

Shy furred things with startled ears
'Twixt the water arums glide,
And all palpitant with fears
Lap the clear and cooling tide.

Oft at midnight's breathless height,
Where the pool spreads shimmering rings
Herons into sudden flight
Upward launch on silent wings.

Mayhap here some smiling maid
Long ago, 'mid summer flowers
Heard the old sweet tale and strayed
Back to Eden's happy bowers.

What though fled the primrose dream,
And the lips that smiled are dust?
Still unaging flows the stream;
Love renews its ancient trust.

PHAON CONCERNING SAPPHO

THAT she is fair of face I know full well;
Her tuneful lips are touched with Delphic fire;
Hers is the haunting voice of wild desire;
She weaves about the world her lyric spell.
When her deft fingers sweep the sounding shell,
'Tis as Apollo's self had struck the lyre,
Waking to music the immortal choir
Which in the shining courts of morning dwell.
Yet, ever to a maid with dove-like eyes—
A gentle maid for whom dawn peaceful days,
Who thriftily her busy distaff plies,
Content and glad in simple household ways—
My heart turns as the bird that homeward flies,
Leaving the queen of song to her proud bays.

AT THE MEADOW BARS

She. "No, leave me now; each silly vow
Will never move my heart, sir;
Come, stand aside! the patient cow,
Grown weary, soon will start, sir.
You my unwilling hands may take,
But thus, sir, you will never make
My young and sleeping love awake;
Come, leave me now!"

He. "O cruel lass! the summers pass,
And wane the days of wooing;
Hearts are more brittle far than glass—
Be not my heart's undoing.
What though the milking-time be here?
Our love-time, Love, is also near;
Ah, brief love's hope, but long love's fear—
O cruel lass!"

She. "The shadows fall, and night-birds call,
O sir, stay not the milking."

He. "Nay, Love, but see, the roses all
Are shed, and corn is silking."

She. "O sir, the coming night makes haste."

He. "O Love, but waiting love **makes waste.**"

She. "Now shame, my kirtle is unlaced."

He. "But shadows fall."

- She.* "O sir, be true!—deep is the dew,
And milking-time is over."
He. "Ay, Love, love's waiting's over, too,
And I am all your lover."
She. "Now let me milk—you've torn my wimple."
He. "But, nay, first let me kiss that dimple."
She. "There! one's enough, dear, don't be simple."
Both. "Love, we'll be true!"

ARCHERY

I SEE them on a slope of English green;
Their fair round arms are shining in the sun;
I hear their bubbling, brook-like laughter run
From shade to shade about the lovely scene.
Again through shaggy boles I catch the sheen
Of flowing tresses, as of red gold spun.
The hurtling arrows sing as, one by one,
They cleave the shadows where the targets lean.
O Robin Hood, when with thine outlaws all
Through merry Sherwood thou didst blithely rove,
Didst thou not with thy ladies, lithe and tall,
Bend the long self-yew in the charmed grove,
And while the tense cords rang, did it befall
That round thee, too, flew viewless darts of love?

PAN

I'LL seek him yet: in some warm nook
He lies asleep beside the brook,
Drugged by the spicy gales that pass;
His pipe beside him on the grass
Lies but half trimmed,—just as it fell
When sleep cast o'er him her soft spell.
I'll seek him yet: he does not hear
The bee that drones beside his ear,
Half buried in the nectared gloom
Of some sweet-burdened, purple bloom.
Above him droop the cooling leaves;
His shaggy bosom falls and heaves,
In his deep slumber's quietness;
He will not hear me, though I press,
Through woven bough and vine and flower,
Quite into his sleep-charméd bower.
Ah me, how soundly he hath slept!
How well the mossy wood hath kept
Its secret old! The poppied gales,
Blown softly by, have told no tales
Of sleeping Pan, while far astray
His white flock goes this many a day.
I'll seek him yet: somewhere he lies
Well screened from peering human eyes;
And though his hoof-marks, as I know,
From mortal sight passed long ago,

Still I will tread the sylvan aisles
And sunny meadows, miles and miles;
I'll follow hard the dragon-fly,
As down the stream he circles by;
I'll track the wild-bee from his home
To that fair place whence it hath come,
Where, hoarding still their honeyed store,
Bloom such rare flowers as starred of yore
The shining slopes of Arcady.
So I will seek him yet; ah me!
Though human foot hath never trod
The leafy lair where lies the god,
Who knows but by some happy chance
I yet may rouse him from his trance!

CHANGE

AH yes! 'twas when the surly winds were chiding,
And all the world was white with winter's death,
I heard thee sing how in thy heart was hiding
The spring's warm breath.

Now summer skies are bending lightly over
The dappled meadows and the fragrant wold,
And lo! where bees drone in the fresh young clover,
Thy heart lies cold.

THE ODALIK

BESIDE the fountain's marble brim
With languid steps she comes to stand
The snowy swans before her swim,
And catch the dainties from her hand.

Her arm rests on a porphyry vase,
And from the long and heavy plumes
Of that rich fan which screens her face,
Float faint and delicate perfumes.

On each slim ankle and white wrist
The bangles chime like tiny bells;
About her, like an azure mist,
Her fluttering mantle sinks and swells.

A dreamy music fills the air,
The fountain tinkles in the sun,
The watchful swans, with stately care,
Glide slowly past her, one by one.

Her broidered garments round her flow,
And half reveal the charms they veil;
Within her jetty tresses glow
The gems that make the sunlight pale.

Her eyes look far away; she heeds
No longer those who seek her alms—
Not e'en that bolder one who pleads
With beak against her velvet palms.

Lo, as she stands, what sudden flame
Is kindled o'er her brow and cheek?
Alas, the memory of her shame!
She is the favorite odalik.

AT A BOOKSTALL

TRUE poet, I have lingered o'er thy page
With heart a-throb; among the tattered books,
As one who, wandering idly through dim nooks,
Finds a rare flower at last, so, unknown mage,
I found thee on the vender's stall. The age
Rolled backward suddenly; 'mid amber stooks
Ruth gleaned again; in evening-glow the rooks
Round Camelot's towers swung. The unholy rage
Of the crass mart died from mine ears; and there
Dream-thralled, unheeding raucous cries, I stood
Seeing the morning flame o'er Ilion fair;
Beaked galleys, purple-sailed, spurned the wide flood;
The Ægean burned; while Helen's sun-kissed hair
Caught the bright sheen as in a golden snood.

MY HOUSE

I HAVE a little house somewhere;
Around it, thick and long,
The cool grass stands, and nightly there
The cricket pipes his song.

The stars, through still and dewy hours,
Lean o'er the quiet place,
While fairy hands festoon the flowers
With shreds of silver lace.

The door is narrow, rude and low,
Yet takes the dawn's first kiss;
Before it the June roses blow
And the wild clematis.

Above its lintel, year by year,
The sparrow builds and sings,
And there, on zephyrs borne, career
A thousand filmy wings.

There oft a wild, shy music wakes;
Winds many an elfin horn;
And there flash into amber flakes
The footprints of the morn.

Sometimes when hushed warm noons are bright,
And shrill the locust calls,
My rooftree basks in lovelier light
Than bathes ancestral halls.

I have a little house somewhere;
Sole tenant I shall be;
And when at length I rest me there,
I shall sleep dreamlessly.

AT FOURSORE

THE hours glide tranquilly away;
I mourn not the unfinished task;
I watch the placid close of day,
Nor answer give nor question ask.
I grieve not for the counsel spurned,
The broken will, the conscience stilled,
The long, hard lesson yet unlearned,
The purpose unfulfilled.

No Spring can wake the old desires;
No sadness greets the fallen leaf;
In ashes of the ancient fires
Relives no spark, however brief.
I reckon not now the battle's stress,
The distant cries, the trampled plain;
Ah, respite after weariness!
Quiescence after pain!

THE IMMORTAL

IT sleeps in the bud and the leaf,
It hides in the rustling sheaf,
It quickens the hushed, cool flowers,
It whispers amid the showers.

It laughs on the sun drenched hill,
It sings in the silvern rill,
It nestles beneath the snow,
It stirs when the March winds blow.

Where the braided midges dance,
Where the wheeling swallows glance—
It is there; and it builds its nest
Even in sorrow's breast.

From the dullness of clodlike things
It wakens and finds its wings;
Though the womb of the dark give it birth,
It leaps and thrills through the earth.

When beaten and wounded sore,
It ariseth, o'er and o'er,
For it never can perish quite—
The spirit of pure delight.

WOULD YOU COME?

THE little pool is there; still o'er it lean
The watching elms, while the soft summer skies,
Seen through the braided boughs that intervene,
Are blue as memory paints your girlish eyes.

And there the narrow path winds from the hill
Down to the daisied fields, the billowing grain;
Ah, if you knew they waited for you still—
The dear old scenes—would you not come again?

Come from the crowded streets, the sordid ways,
To seek the sweet familiar haunts of yore,
Remembering still those bare-foot, dawn-fresh days—
Oh my lost playmate, would you come once more?

THE PLAY

THE endless mime goes on; new faces come,
New mummers babble in each other's ears;
And some wear masks of woe, of laughter some,
Nor know they play Life's Comedy of Tears.

SHE CAME AND WENT

SHE came and went, as comes and goes
The dewdrop on the morning rose,
Or as the tender lights that die
At shut of day along the sky.
Her coming made the dawn more bright,
Her going brought the somber night;
Her coming made the blossoms shine,
Her going made them droop and pine.
Where'er her twinkling feet did pass,
Beneath them greener grew the grass;
The song-birds ruffled their small throats
To swell for her their blithest notes.
But when she went, the blushing day
Sank into silence chill and gray,
The dark its sable vans unfurled,
And sudden night possessed the world.
O fond desires that wake in vain!
She ne'er will come to us again;
And now, like vanished perfume sweet,
Her memory grows more vague and fleet.
Yet we rejoice that morn by morn
The sad old world seems less forlorn,
Since once so bright a vision came
To touch our lives with heavenly flame,
And show to our bewildered eyes
What beauty dwells in Paradise.

THE DIFFERENCE

HER plants bloom on the window ledge;
Behind its wicker bars
Her bird still sings, and by yon hedge
Her lilies burn like stars.

Beside the walk her pansies raise
Their faces to the sun,
And round her porch, in many a maze,
The flickering vine-leaves run.

Her slender wheel has ceased to hum
Beneath her nimble hands,
And there, close-shut and sadly dumb,
Her sweet-voiced spinet stands.

The doves still flutter to her door,
And wait and coo in vain;
And passers-by pause as of yore
To hear her happy strain.

But she who, like a fine perfume,
Filled all the sunny place,
Lies in a hushed and darkened room,
With pale and moveless face.

IN MID-JOURNEY

AN onward traveler, lo! I stand
Midway the changed, uneven land;
A moment now I pause to look
Back o'er the path my feet forsook
A brief while since: I see the stream
Bright in the early sunlight gleam;
I see the woven branches spread
Where late I walked with naked head,
And felt the wind's touch, light and free,
Upon my forehead lovingly.
Hushed are the voices that I heard—
The laugh of maid, the song of bird;
And now the flowers forget to blow
Along the barren way I go.
No more the glancing waters run
O'er golden shallows in the sun,
Or gurgle down the fragrant bed
Where cool and green the cresses spread.
No dew is on the withered grass,
Nor shining rain; where'er I pass,
The wind stirs with a mournful sound
The dry leaves in the thickets round.
In vain I seek with longing eyes
Some sign within the sober skies,
That once again the morning light
Shall wake me to the old delight.

Behind me smiles, still fresh and sweet,
The land of youth; with lingering feet
I turn me to the onward way,
And the strange landscape, chill and gray.

THE WATCHER

LOW hang the clouds, the clouds hang gray and low;
Upon the far hills falls the thin, cold rain;
The stream moans through the fields as one in pain,
And madcap winds awake and wildly blow
The torn and ragged vapors to and fro
About the ruined garden, where in vain
One desolate bird, again and yet again,
Lifts up its single piercing note of woe.
Hour after hour, from youder shivering wold,
The drenched leaves o'er the sodden meadows fly,
Till solemnly the darkness, fold on fold,
Curtains the troubled world from every eye;
But ah! I still bend o'er her locks of gold,
And count each thread-like pulse, each fluttering sigh.

FORGOTTEN

A LITTLE mound beneath the pine
Upon the gradual slope,
Where wandering tendrils of the vine
Like tremulous fingers grope;
There happy birds the livelong day
Ruffle their slender throats,
And in the slanting sunbeams play
A myriad glancing motes.

A handful of forgotten earth
Beneath the hushed cool flowers,
Its backward span from death to birth
Numbered but days and hours;
Yet plenteous tears bedewed the sod
That wrapt the roseleaf face,
When breaking hearts gave back to God
This guerdon of his grace.

Years wheel like shadows o'er the grass;
Dust are the hearts that bled;
Rumors of change that come and pass
Vex not this little bed.
O sleep that knows no evil dreams,
O dove-white, sinless breast,
We, wearying mid Time's tearful gleams,
Envy thine early rest.

THE SWEET-PEA

A SLENDER pink-faced village lass,
'Round whom the light winds, as they pass,
Linger carressingly, if so
To win a favor ere they go.
A fluttering ribbon clasps her waist;
About her forehead, calm and chaste,
Bright ringlets blow; her dove-like eyes
Are pure and deep as summer skies.
She is a sunny, fragile thing,
And you may see her blossoming
Adown some mossy garden way,
Fresh as the dew, and fair as day.
What though old-fashioned she may be?
True hearts still love the shy sweet-pea.

TIGER-LILY

WHAT torrid days have poured their quivering
heat
Into the hollow of thy slender urn,
Till now within thy heart, once chastely sweet,
The fires of tropic heavens ever burn!

Or pale, perchance, as virgin peaks of snow,
Thou stood'st in stainless splendor, till one day
A wounded tiger at thy feet crouched low,
And o'er thy chalice plashed his blood's red spray.

THE CRICKET

PIPER of the fields and woods
And the fragrant solitudes,
When the trees are stripped of leaves,
And the choked brook sobs and grieves;
When the golden-rod alone
Feigns the summer hath not flown;
Then while evening airs grow chill,
And the flocks upon the hill
Huddle in the waning light,
Thou, ere falls the frosty night,
To the kine that homeward pass
Pipest 'mid the stiffening grass.

Dark may dawn the winter days,—
Where thou art the summer stays;
Though the ruffian north winds roar,
Lash the roof and smite the door,
Thou from hearths secure and warm
Laughst at the brewing storm,
And thy merry minstrelsy
Sets the frozen fancy free.
Dost thou dream, O piper brave,
That from his sea-haunted grave
He who praised thy song of yore
Hath come back to hear once more,
Through high noons, thy strident strain

Borne o'er Enna's saffron plain?
Long, long since the nectared hoard
That the yellow bees had stored
In the turf above his head
Hath by many a passing tread
O'er the chamber of his sleep,
In the dust been trampled deep.
From his lentisk couch of rest,
In his shaggy goat-skin vest,
He shall rise no more to hear,
With the poet's raptured ear,
O'er the thymy pastures swell
Morning sounds he loved so well.
Other skies are over us,
And afar Theocritus
Slumbers deep, O piper small,
And he will not heed at all
Though be struck thy shrillest notes;
Yet a voice like thine still floats
O'er him where thy shy kin be
Mid the dews of Sicily.

A MODERN JOUST

THE trumpets of the morning-glories sound
A loud alarum to the brave knights round;
The joust begins, and proudly on the breeze
With lance in rest comes riding down the bees.

JOAN D'ARC

ONCE in the fields she watched her peaceful flocks;
Light were her feet upon the sunny hills;
For her the violets smiled beside the rocks;
Hers was the silver music of the rills.

She breathed fine odors from the woody place
Where cool, deep ferns were set; above her head
The summer sky leaned like a tender face;
Along her path the morning dewes were shed.

But suddenly she heard the wild alarm
Of deadly war; then from her simple sheep,
Forth to the conflict and the battle's harm
She went like one awaking from a sleep.

Ah! when the flames rolled round her in the mart,
And cruel faces wavered through the haze
Of her fierce martyrdom,—when on her heart
Thronged the swift memories of other days,—

Perchance no thought of royal pomp and pride,
No thought of armies, nor of iron war's
Torn fields, nor of the men who fought and died,
Nor yet of stony cells nor prison bars,—

No thought of these was hers; but on her ears
Faint sounds of sheep-bells smote, as in a dream,
And a fair vision glimmered through her tears—
Her father's cottage by a quiet stream.

THE TWO PATHS

THERE are two ways which, every morning-tide,
Before the hurrying feet of men divide:
Along one path the pleasant light is shed;
The birds sing gaily; smiling skies o'erspread
The happy earth, and the sweet air is rife
With myriad throbbing sounds of busy life.
About the other path the mists hang low,
And darkness gathers o'er it, deep and slow;
From unseen valleys sweeps an icy breath,
And whoso walks there, treads the way of death.
Two paths there be—one wherein fareth life,
With patient weariness and honest strife;
And one where labor finds its sure surcease,
And haunting voices ever murmur "Peace."
Go wheresoe'er thou wilt, or east or west,
Two paths there be—who knoweth which is best?

A BROKEN DREAM

ALL night I dreamed of peace, and through deep
vales
Wandered where perfume-haunted winds blew free,
And saw, like summer swallows, purple sails
Slant o'er the darkling sea.

The gray morn rose; along the lurid east
I saw War's torn and bloody ensign float,
And the swart cannon, like a huge blind beast,
Roared from its brazen throat.

THE INN

HOW quiet is this mossy inn
Where weary travelers lie,
Unheeding how the morns begin,
And how the sunsets die.

Here are no sounds of reveling,
Here is no flaring light;
Here no fair maids with laughter bring
The tankards foaming bright.

The guests sleep long, the lights are out;
No bustling landlord calls
His serving-men with cheery shout
Along the echoing halls.

Who come to this still inn abide
Through cycles deep and sweet;
And while the seasons o'er them glide,
They rest their tired feet.

MUSIC

A SHADE of thought lay on His ageless face,
Till suddenly God said, "Let there be light,"
When lo! His smile like sunshine streamed through
space,
And music thrilled adown the gulfs of night.

THE DAWN OF WOMANHOOD

WHAT! have my rosebud's petals all
Unsealed their musky treasures?
My little maid, grown sweet and tall,
Now clasps a woman's pleasures?
Ah, surely 'twas but yesterday
I heard her birdlike singing,
And in the fields her childish play
Set frolic echoes ringing.

Now all the glory of her hair
In golden coils is lying
Crown-like above her forehead fair;
Ah, how I loved it flying
Like amber spray about her throat,
When through the sunny shadows
She fairy-like did lightly float
Across the daisied meadows.

Now little loves on velvet wings,
Like bees above a blossom,
Hover with timid flutterings
About her virgin bosom.
Her frock creeps downward to her feet;
Her dreams grow fondly human;
Ah, one more kiss as child, my sweet,
Ere I confess you woman.

SILENUS

SEE the beast on which he rides
By the dewy forest-sides,
All his huge, loose-belted girth
Shaking with his boisterous mirth!
Now his rough head back he tips,
And with pursed and eager lips,
Swollen cheeks and gloating eye,
Drains a vine-wreathed flagon dry.
Hark! within the hollow wood
Wake the echoes wild and rude.
Goat-hoofed satyrs dance with glee,
And, to swell the revelry,
Shag-eared fauns the riot lead,
Blowing each a notched reed.

So the braying beast he strides
Bears him on, and on he rides,—
Old Silenus, wanton, gay,
Recking not where winds his way,
If again his heavy ear
May the voice of Bacchus hear.
Noisiest of his noisy crew,
He has sought the forests through;
In the gnarled and moss-grown trees
Hid the timorous dryades,
And from many a fountained glade
Fled the white-limbed nymphs afraid,

There, where lately passed his train,
Lie the tender wood-flowers slain;
And the spray, so rudely dashed
From yon stream through which he splashed,
Scattering crystals far and wide,
Scarce has from the young plants dried.
Now around yon distant height
Wends the masking throng from sight—
Old Silenus on his quest,
Seeking Bacchus without rest.

Ah! the earth with years is hoar,
But the scene comes back once more,
And the sylvan arches ring
With the sounds of reveling;
Still amid his reeling rout
Forth he strides with song and shout,
Through the dales of Arcady,
Seeking where the god may be,—
Couched, perhaps, 'mid dusky firs,
Or, where happy vintagers
High their osier baskets heap,
By some wine-press, fast asleep,
While his tawny pards bask nigh,
Stretched at ease beneath the sky.

THE CHILD THAT WAS

WHERE is the child that used to be,
That knew the small folk of the lea,
That saw them frisk in the dew-wet grass,
And heard them pipe when the wind did pass;
That knew what the nodding daisies said,
And why the trefoil hung its head,
And marked how the violets, purple-sweet,
Whispered love at his happy feet;
That caught the inarticulate words
Trolled by the summer-haunting birds,
In meadow nooks where dusty bees
Flitted on honeyed embassies,
While drowsily their deep bassoon
Chimed with the fountain's silver tune;
The child to whom night brought the slow,
Large, yellow planets burning low,
And dawn, a world most fair to see,—
Ah, where is the child that used to be?

Fled, alas! with the vanished morns,
With the wind's glad songs and the elfin's horns;
Fled forever and ever away,
While a care-worn man keeps watch to-day,
With wistful face and tear-dimmed eyes,
Above the tomb where his childhood lies.

A MEMORY OF THEOCRITUS

THUS will I lie, on this green couch of leaves
Stript from the wayward vine, and while the
brook

Beneath its slender osiers sweetly grieves,
And elfin echoes haunt each shadowy nook,
I'll hearken how, among the rocks o'erhead,
The fountain tinkles down its narrow bed.

Cool in this dim recess the breath of day
Is softly blown, and from the humid moss
Thin exhalations rise, that steal away,
Elusive as a dream; the branches toss
Their emerald brede above me, and below,
Far down the kine to lusher pastures go.

Sweet sounds and odors fold me like a sleep;
A wood-bird whistles from its piney bower;
A maiden's silvery laughter mounts the steep;
And dreamily from one tall purple flower
That o'er me slowly vibrates, censer-wise,
Fine wreaths of fragrant incense seem to rise.

O singer who, in honeyed Sicily,
Long years ago upon some morning height,
Did'st hear the droning of the vagrant bee,
And saw fair Enna smiling in the light,
I'd half believe thou hadst come back again,
Should goat-hoofed Pan but pipe a sudden strain.

BY THE BROOK

O'ER it slender osiers lean,
And it's waters purl between

Banks of moss where violets grow,
And the wind breathes sweet and low.

'Mid its rushes minnows hide,
Or o'er silver shallows glide,

Pausing oft as if to dream,
Poised against the wavering stream.

Here the birds light on the brink,
Plash their dusty plumes, and drink;

There where deeper waters run,
Broad-leaved lilies take the sun.

By this willow let us lie;
It may chance that, bye and bye,

If we watch and make no sound,
While the midges murmur round,

We shall see him unafraid
Stumbling down the sun-flecked glade,

We shall see his shaggy thighs,
His puffed cheeks and gloating eyes,

And his hairy pointed ears,
Sharper grown with ceaseless fears.

We shall see him as he stands,
And with swift and nimble hands,

From the reed-beds, where they grow,
Plucks him pipes whereon to blow,

Notching each with eager skill,
Tossing each aside, until

From some slim and hollow shoot
He shall shape a pipe to suit

His wild fancy; then the day
Shall grow dumb to hear him play.

Hist! behold yon trembling bough;
It may be Pan cometh now.

THE FAUN

I CHANCED upon him in the early morn;
He stood beneath the vine-roofed trellises,
All heedless of the yellow-belted bees
That fumed about him; in the ripened corn
The reapers sang, and through the grove of pine
A clear-voiced neatress called her straying kine.

With osier crates poised on their heads, and bare
Brown necks and dimpled shoulders all aglow,
The vintage-girls were passing to and fro
Along the dewy slope; the morning air
With sudden laughter rang, and on the steep
The frolic echoes wakened from their sleep.

I caught the twinkling of his hairy ears;
I heard his eager murmurs, as he plucked
The purple clusters, and the nectar sucked
From wine-red cores; his ever-watchful fears
Were drowned a moment in the mad delight
Wherewith he reveled in my wondering sight.

He stood tiptoe and stretched his naked arm
To draw the heavy-fruited branches near;
I saw him crush the glossy orbs, and smear
His cheeks with crimson; then in wild alarm
He heard my stealthy footsteps, and amid
The wattled vines he swiftly fled and hid.

He scarcely snapped a bind-weed in his flight,
Or frailest tendril; long I sought in vain
Through leafy glooms, but found him not again:
The dew dried on the grass, the mellow light
Brimmed all the misty valley, but the faun,
Fleet as a vision of the morn, was gone.

THE WORLD'S WAY

AT morn I heard them say:
"Beware of him; some day
He will abuse thy trust;
Then in the common dust
Thine idol shall be cast.
Beware of him; at last,
Who knows but he may turn and rend,
Brute-like, the hand of his best friend?"

At eve I heard them say
Where calm the dead man lay:
"Alas! we shall not see
His like again; for he,
True to the very end,
Did ne'er betray a friend."
Thus low they spake beside the dead,
Nor thought what they at morn had said.

REJUVENESCENCE

THE warm light streams o'er Enna's sunny plain,
Round which the yellow bees still rove in vain;
Not now, as erstwhile in the golden prime,
White ankles twinkle through the purple thyme,
While bearded grass and blossoms honey-sweet
Bend at the sudden touch of slender feet.
Long since the blooms fled at the loud alarms
Of ruthless traffic. In her sun-browned arms
Bearing her water-jar, no maiden goes
Where through the sedge the glancing fountain flows
With song less blithe than hers in whose dark eyes,
Timid yet glad, love's dawning glory lies.
The dust long since has mingled with her heart,
And he whose love she bore sleeps where the dart
Of the proud Tyrian pierced him in the fray:
Gone, gone the bliss and pain of that old day—
The shepherd fluting on his notched reed,
The neatress calling through the dusky brede
Of haunted woodlands, and the answering bell
Where straying kine browse in the shady dell.
And yet, for eyes that see, these days which pass
Kindle a splendor in the ancient grass;
Still on the heights the ageless wonder shines
Where morn and even set their burning signs.
Yea, whoso keeps his early vision clear

Beholds the footprints of the immortals near,
And sees their garments trailing from the brier
Where the light gossamer shakes its beads of fire.
And there is room to-day for valorous deeds,
For truth's high ministry to human needs,
And wheresoe'er love has its trembling birth
Its wizardry renews the hoary earth;
Thus evermore, down morning paths dew-pearled,
The spirit of delight walks through the world.

THE ROVER

OVER, ay, over, 'tis over,
Gone with its dew and its bloom,
Gone with the rose and the lover,
Gone with its light and perfume.

Over, ay, summer is over;
Days for the wooing were brief,
Brief for the bird and the lover,
Brief for the sun and the leaf.

Over, ay over, 'tis over;
Vanished its laughter and song;
Summer departs like a rover;
Ah! winter shall bide with us long.

CHILDREN OF YESTERDAY

*For we are but of yesterday, and knowing nothing,
because our days upon earth are a shadow.—Job viii. 9.*

CHIDE not that these poor lips of ours
Smile not with yours that are so fair;
When falls the frost the fading flowers
Scarce keep their dream of summer air;
Our hearts are chill, our memories sad,
Our laughter is no longer gay;
The songs we sing are never glad—
Alas! we are of yesterday.

The skies that o'er us bend their blue
Gleam not as did the skies of yore;
The eyes and cheeks of winsome hue,
The beauty that our darlings wore,
We shall not see on earth again.
Our pulses faint, our heads are gray;
You woo us with your joy in vain—
Alas! we are of yesterday.

The hands that once our own did clasp,
With twining fingers warm and sweet,
Have slipped from out our trembling grasp,
And lie where lie the quiet feet
That in the old bright days did run
To meet ours in love's primrose way;
Now mists o'ercloud the evening sun—
Alas! we are of yesterday.

O eyes like midnight stars that glow,
And lips that still like rosebuds ope,
And ye within whose breasts of snow
Still carols clear the bird of hope,
Your freshness, as of morning keep;
Gather love's harvest while ye may;
But we, ah, we no longer reap—
Alas! we are of yesterday.

AUTUMN

HER'S is the mellow booming of the flail,
The flaming bough, the sunset-crimsoned rill:
O'er every field her smoky banners trail;
She sets her ruby sign on every hill.

Her garments, drifting o'er the fallen leaves,
Are freaked with spurted purple of the vats;
And as she glides amid the amber sheaves
Her locks flow down in golden cataracts.

There melts a honey-murmur on her lips;
Her throat is tanned, her eyes are sunny-clear;
She moves forever in a soft eclipse,
The rustic darling of the doting year.

THE LOST VOYAGE

OUT of the darkling sunset-sea,
Out of the windy sky,
My ship comes toiling home to me,
Climbing the billows high.

She wearily mounts the dim sea-line,
Treading the foam-wastes down;
Her breast is blanched with the bitter brine;
The spume is round her blown.

In alien deeps she has dipt her spars;
She has swept from strand to strand;
Her crews have ransacked strange bazaars
In many a sunburnt land.

But well I know, on this evening shore,
My ship brings not to me
The treasure sought,—and nevermore
Shall she put out to sea.

TRUTH

FROM level brows her eyes look straight before;
She falters not to seek what lies beyond;
Her vesture, travel-stained, is freaked with gore;
From her free wrist down coils a broken bond.

THE SIDE UNSEEN

BENEATH the spreading boughs she stood,
The farmer's daughter, young and fair,
While shadows caught, as in a snood,
The tresses of her shining hair;
She leaned above the lichened bar,
And gazed, with eyes that softly glowed,
Where through the opal haze a car
Whirled down the long and dusty road.

Upon her vision lingered yet
A fragile, weary face, gray-veiled,
Wherein the lines of grief were set;
She saw the drooping lips that failed
To hide the pain and discontent
Still laying waste an unloved breast;
Yet as she homeward slowly went,
Her soul was filled with vague unrest.

Hers not the hours of ease and wealth,
Of costly robes and priceless gems,
But sweet cool morns that breathed of health,
The hushed eve's dewy diadems,
A sunlit world, a turquoise heaven,
Calm days with lowly labors rife;
Yet these, all these, she would have given,
To live that other woman's life.

And she who fared upon her way,
Sweeping through summer sun and shade,
Scarce saws for tears the smiling day,
But longed to be the farmer's maid;
Her hateful nights ne'er brought release;
Each morn anew some venom'd dart
Smote down her slender dream of peace,
While hope fled wailing from her heart.

A COLONIAL MEMORY

I HEARD her footsteps on the stair;
The silken rustling of her dress;
And forth there stole upon the air
The perfume of her loveliness;
Adown her gleaming shoulders streamed
Her cloudy tresses, dusk as night,
And round her brow I saw, it seemed,
An aureole of light.

And as she stood a moment, slim,
And tall and beautiful and kind,
The flaring tapers all waxed dim,
Chill sighs went past me on the wind.
Then woke my heart; and suddenly
I knew, in that dissolving shade,
The ghost of a dear memory
That never shall be laid.

ON THE WHEEL

HOW fair they lie!—the circling hills,
Down whose green slopes the summer spills
Her lavish wealth of sun and rain,
Of light and dew. Along the plain,
The errant spice-winds, breathing balm
And scent of southern pine and palm,
Whisper amid the rustling corn
That shakes its plumes beneath the morn.
Through grassy closes, clear and bright
The brooks dance in the misty light,
And one blithe bird, loud caroling,
Dips in the flood a glancing wing.
The flowers that bloom beside the way,
The glistening hedge, the thorny spray,
And myriad beaded blades of grass
Sparkle with diamonds as we pass.
Hark! from the field the farmer's song,
And answering echoes, sweet and long,
Redouble round the emerald vale,
Till o'er the wold they faint and fail.
Still as we pass on noiseless wheels,
The changing landscape glows and reels;
The flaming sun, high and more high,
Mounts up the cloudless summer sky;
We catch the shouts of lads at play
Amid the fragrant new-mown hay,
And sounds of shrill-voiced grigs that sing,
And whetted scythes that cheerly ring.

Through many a shifting scene we flash;
We hear the busy mill-wheel dash;
We hear the shaft that creaks and groans,
The ceaseless whirring of the stones;
Then on we fare; the clattering mill
Is left behind, and all is still.
Ay, all is still; high noon o'erhead
A popped influence hath shed;
The very insects cease to hum,
And all the breathless world is dumb.
Still on with noiseless wheels we go,
Till in the west the sun dips low—
Till whip-poor-wills begin to call,
And o'er the fields slim shadows fall.
Along our way the midges spin;
Hushed is the day's melodious din,
While piping voices, far and near,
With sweet lamenting vex the ear,
The forest aisles are still and dark,
Save where the firefly lights his spark;
And o'er the marish by the way
A mist is rising, ghostly gray.
Now softly glows the evening star
Above us; we have ridden far,
And night is come; a sound of bells,
Like sudden music, sinks and swells
In yonder vale, and through the night
A lamp shines like a beacon-light.
Ah, happy inn! ah, happy guest!
How sweet is night! How sweet is rest!

AN INCOMPLETE ANGLER

THE bearded grass sways to and fro,
As o'er the fields light zephyrs go;
The reeds nod by the river's brink,
Where birds come down to lave and drink.
Upon the wave the lilies ride;
The trailing vines dip in the tide,
And countless frogs, screened in the sedge,
Boom all along the water's edge.
Here, where the shadows round me wait,
I'll sit and cast my luring bait.
Above my leafy canopy,
The summer clouds float dreamily;
The sun, high o'er the cool dark wood,
Smiles down upon the twinkling flood;
The busy insects round me hum;
The stealthy herons go and come;
A butterfly, with gorgeous wings,
To yon tall flag one moment clings,
Then with a sidewise wavering flight,
Rises and flutters out of sight.
Still I my luckless victim bide;
I watch where frolic sunbeams hide
Deep in the bosom of the stream;
I see his burnished armor gleam,
As round and round the tempting fly
He circles oft and warily.

Why should a fish refuse to dine
 From such a dainty hook as mine?
 I'll wait and watch him yet. Ah me!
 The day is warm. How drowsily
 The flies drone near! The river flows
 Like sluggish Lethe; I shall doze
 If nature thus my senses steep
 In languor—but .. I .. must .. not .. sleep.

* * * * *

Old fellow, are you waiting yet
 To taste my hook? .. The grass is wet!
 How now—the dew is falling? No!..
 Yes, in the west the sun is low,
 And shadows lie around me deep;
 It must be that I dropped asleep.
 O Isaak Walton—honored ghost!—
 Didst e'er thus slumber at thy post?
 But see, the fireflies round me flit!
 I wonder if that rascal bit:
 The hook is gone!—and snell gone too!
 There's nothing further left to do,
 But meekly wind my idle reel,
 And homeward fare with empty creel.

CAPRICE

AH, lover, marvel not the maid, once kind,
 Should wound thee now with words of sudden
 scorn:
 So shifts from change to change the freakish wind;
 So every rose wears, poniard-like, its thorn.

AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

OLD-FASHIONED? Yes, I must confess
The antique pattern of her dress,
The ancient frills and furbelows,
The faded ribbons and the bows.
Why should she show those shrunk charms,
That wrinkled neck, those tawny arms,
I cannot guess; her russet gown
Round her spare form hangs loosely down;
Her voice is thin and cracked; her eye
And smile have lost their witchery.
By those faint jests, that flagging wit,
By each attenuated curl,
She surely is, I must admit,
An odd, old-fashioned girl.

'Tis long, long since she had a beau,
And now with those who sit a-row
Along the wall she takes her place,
With something of the old-time grace.
She yearns to join the mazy waltz,
And slyly sniffs her smelling-salts.
Ah, many an angel in disguise
May walk before our human eyes!
Where'er the fever smitten lie
In grimy haunts of poverty,

Along the dark and squalid street,
'Mid drunken jests of boor and churl,
She goes with swift and pitying feet—
This same old-fashioned girl.

TO A CHILD

O LITTLE hands and little feet,
O little heart whose pulses beat
With rhythmic motions, full and sweet!

Soon—ah, how soon!—O tender one,
Shall winter frost and summer sun
Waste thy young life, as seasons run.

Come hither, press thy soft red lips
To mine, before the rude world nips
The blossoms from the fragile slips.

Not far away the city lies
Where all who journey pilgrim-wise
Close in the dusk their tired eyes.

Keep in thy heart the morning song;
Life's longest journey is not long;
Sing and fare on, be brave and strong.

THE TRANSFORMATION

A LONG the hills the winds are mute ;
The yellow sunlight falls
On streams by which the birds still flute
Their evening madrigals.

I tread the old familiar path,
Among the peaceful sheep,
Nor dream that e'er war's vengeful wrath
Could o'er this landscape sweep.

And yet far hence o'er other fields,
By such a quiet stream,
The shuddering heaven rocks and reels,
And wounded horses scream ;

And men, with hate and fury blind,
And bayonets dripping red,
Go charging down the poisoned wind,
Across the mangled dead.

Yet mayhap there, mid daisies sweet,
When summer airs blew free,
Some loiterer fared with aimless feet,
Nor dreamed that this could be.

LILAC BLOSSOMS

SO long—ah, so long ago!
But the world is not so fair,
And never such bland south winds will blow,
Nor such lilacs scent the air,
As in those old sweet days
When the feet of the luminous hours
Sped swiftly down the grassy ways,
And the meadows laughed with flowers.

Her eyes were clear as the morn;
Her hair, like a golden net,
Had meshed the light; and the pink-white thorn,
Or the slender violet
Plashed with the crystal drops of rain,
Was not so fresh as she;—
With the green young spring she comes again
Like a fragrant memory.

O lilacs heavy with dew,
Thy delicate purple plumes
Bring back the days when life was new,
And the lanes were fringed with blooms;
When the skies bent down with peace,
And the earth with music thrilled—
When it seemed love's song would never cease
And youth's glad heart was filled.

CONTRAST

I SAW his face black with the dust of toil;
His eyes gleamed white from out the swart
expanse;
Upon his knotted hands the nails were broken;
His grimy shirt, wide open at the throat,
Revealed a hirsute chest streaked with the soot
And sweat of the foul mines where, in the dark,
Amid the little dancing lamps, he strove
And like a Titan wrestled with the earth;
The mountain's ooze had dripped upon him; scars
Where the fanged rocks had gashed him, seamed his
cheeks.
Bent, not with age, and shuffling as he walked,
Spewed from the pit with the new-risen sun,
He sought the joyless lair he called his home,
Brute-like to eat, then sink in sodden sleep
And for a while forget.

And she who passed him,
Daintily gloved and gowned, with slender feet
Tapping their tiny heels upon the pave,
Nursling of luxury, daughter of content,
Gave him no heed, save that one delicate hand,
With scarcely conscious motion, swept aside
Her garmets lest they touch him. Yet the fires
That warmed and comforted her tender flesh,
And made her glad, were fed from that man's life.

A MODERN ORPHEUS

DULL-EYED he treads the city street
Where tides of traffic part and meet;
His barrel-organ's iterant strain
He scarcely hears; in every vein
Is deadly weariness; his soul,
As waves of languor o'er it roll,
In noise and heat and dust is drowned;
Yet on he plods his daily round,
So strong are wonted uses still
To bind the motions of the will.
But suddenly he stops, aware
Of some sweet fragrance in the air,
Elusive, faint. . . . As in a dream,
Again he watches by a stream
Whose cool bright waters smoothly flow
Betwixt green banks where violets grow.
Then, while his flock about him feeds,
He gathers from a bed of reeds
An emerald pipe wherefrom to woo
A music rare as Orpheus knew.
The vision fades—by yon grim wall
He sees a flower-vender's stall,
And hears the loud insistent cry,
"Fresh violets! who'll buy! who'll buy!"

IN EXILE

BY myriad-trodden ways I go;
And yet my feet have known
Green banks where singing waters flow,
And musky scents are blown
From pastures where wild roses grow,
Past meadows newly mown.

Now deafening clamors stun my ear;
Yet I have heard the horn
Of questing bees wind sweet and clear
Above the tasseled corn,
And thrushes fluting far and near
Through all the golden morn.

Still in my heart old memories dwell;
Cool dawns and quiet eves;
Dim wooded paths, a sunlit dell,
Low whisperings of leaves;
Hushed noons that weave their breathless spell;
Swart arms that bind the sheaves.

So, while the thunderous tides pass by,
And granite canyons roar,
Somewhere I see a dappled sky
Arching forevermore
O'er smiling fields, a cottage nigh,
And doves about the door.

A MEMORY OF HOME

(In the City)

THROUGH purple twilight still the eye may marl
Like slender campaniles, fretted tiles
And towering chimneys, where the sunset smiles
Softly beneath the slowly gathering dark.
A silence falls upon the shadowy park;
And past the clustered tree-tops, miles on miles,
Borne faintly from afar through leafy aisles,
The homesick fancy hears a farm-dog's bark.
And now I breathe the scent of clover-fields;
Through summer gloom the fitful fireflies roam,
A distant bell makes silvery appeals
From the low vale beneath its starry dome;
And lo! o'er leagues of winking lights there steals,
Dewy and sweet, the memory of home.

EVENING AMONG THE OAKS

FLITTING through twilight and shadows,
Dimly I see,
With tenuous robes like a mist-wreath
And pale feet that flee,
A glimmering shape in the silence.
And, tossed on the air
Like a cloudy veil blown from white shoulders,
A dryad's dusk hair.

AN OCEAN BURIAL

MY love lies where the wild waves beat
Above her shell-strewn bed;
The sands are wrapt about her feet,
The weeds about her head.

The calm stars, wheeling through their zones,
Are doubled o'er her breast;
The moving waste forever moans
Round her uncoffined rest.

Slow through the gloom, with dreadful eyes,
Strange monsters o'er her glide;
On gentle currents fall and rise
The tresses at her side.

She recks not how the loud winds call,
Nor hears the sea-birds scream;
Sea-shadows round her ever fall,
Sea-lights about her gleam.

Naught e'er disturbs her sweet repose;
No fears her breast alarm;
The silent waters round her close,
And fold her safe from harm.

IN THE NIGHT-WATCHES

THOU camest in the silent night;
Thy voice was hushed and low,
And round thee, like a misty light,
Thy garments seemed to flow.

Thy presence wrought the old sweet spell;
I felt my pulses thrill,
As on my brow thy kisses fell
Like snowflakes pure and chill.

I heard thee lightly breathe my name,
And while I strove to rise,
Upon me dawned a starry flame—
The splendor of thine eyes.

And I was blest; the lucid world
Kindled with song and bloom—
Till sudden storms about me whirled;
Down crashed the ancient doom.

I woke—to know thou still dost keep,
While weary years pass by,
Somewhere thy long and hallowed sleep
Beneath a distant sky.

For me alone the broken rest,
Waste dreams that come and pass;
For thee the calm untroubled breast,
Strange flowers, and alien grass.

VANISHED

O H, sweet as early violets fresh with the breath of
spring,
And vague and mist-like as the wreathes of green that
softly cling
To hillside, vale and meadow, far wood and grassy
shore—
So sweet, so bright, so misty-vague the days that are
no more.

Down the long years come echoes low of dreamy voices
borne
On fragrant winds that wander from the lucid fields
of morn;
The gossamers are pearled with dew, and by the azure
wold
A million buttercups uplift their fragile urns of gold.
There bubbles still the silver brook, the birds still
sing and build;
The orchards, bridal-clothed, still keep the heart of
youth unchilled;
All is unchanged, save that no more with rustic rod
and line
Whistling a barefoot urchin goes where waters leap
and shine.

Eager and blithe across the velvet sward he lightly
 lopes;
From cloudless skies the sun glows not more brightly
 than his hopes;
He knows the haunts of dace and chub, in coverts
 green and cool,
Where the great willow casts its shade upon the sleep-
 ing pool.

Ah! what avail laborious days, the striving and the
 care,
The empty honors that are won, the fading bays we
 wear,
If that the heart is dead at length, nor hears the old
 refrain
Of some dear vanished morning? Oh, to be a boy
 again!

THE MOTHER

THIS is the threshold where we stood
 When last her lips were pressed to mine;
I saw the pallor of her cheek,
 Her eyes with tears a-shine.

With joy I turned to meet the world;
 My spirit no foreboding gave;
Defeated, shorn, today I wept
 By her untended grave.

AN ATTIC CHAMBER

HARK! the rain drips upon the broken roof!
Ah, many a time I've heard it mid the leaves
Of the great butternut whose branches swept
The narrow casement of my little room
Far hence in that dear home my boyhood knew.
What time is it? Seven of the clock, you say?
Now the red sun beyond the Litchfield hills
Is setting; birds are hasting to their nests
With low sweet cries, while half way up the slope,
Its windows winking to the level rays,
Stands the old house which I shall see no more.
Is't the wind sobbing past the door I hear?
Oft when, at eve, spent with excess of joy,
In the cool pillow I have pressed a flushed
Young cheek, upon the night breeze there has come
The river's distant murmur, soothing me
To happy slumber; now the city roars
Beneath yon shattered lintel, while I try
In vain to fancy 'tis the gradual voice
Of that loved stream.

There is another stream,
You say, that from beneath the great white throne
Flows making glad the city of God?—and yet,
Could I behold once more that winding vale,
That twinkling flood, that moss-grown roof, and catch
A sound of children's laughter as of yore,
Then I could die content.

O sir, you are
A holy man, yet still a man; your heart
Must surely understand how all my soul
Longs for that quiet spot far, far away,
Where in the sunlit garden hollyhocks
And poppies grow, and all the livelong day
The bees keep revel, and the butterflies
Like wingéd blossoms flutter to and fro.
How the rain splashes 'gainst the panes! 'tis cold:
This bed of straw and this thin coverlet
Are pierced with mortal chill.

A-hungered?—no,
I only crave a little mothering,
For I am young yet. You are kind, sir, kind
To pray with me, to hold my hand, and wet
My parchéd lips—but O! for that soft touch,
When gentle fingers, light as summer dew,
Smoothed back my hair, and o'er me bent the eyes,
Patient and glad, that made my heaven of love.
I'm tired now, sir, and I fain would sleep;
It may be I shall dream of those green hills,
That ancient time-stained house, that garden fair,
That smiling stream, and that angelic face
Which I shall not behold again. Farewell!
I do not fear; but I am weary now,
O! very weary, sir, and I would sleep.

THE world is hungering for him still;
He comes not, yet the hour seems near
When dawn the vision shall fulfill,
And morning find its promised seer.

Great souls are groping toward the light;
The nether deeps at last are stirred;
Dim eyes are straining through the night—
When shall that new brave voice be heard?

The earth, grown hoary with its wrongs,
With pain and feud and bitter strife,
Shall gather easement from his songs,
Rekindled faith and nobler life.

For he shall chant of duties old,
Of love, and truth, and gallant scars,
Of fearsome shadows backward rolled,
Of heavens that blossom into stars.

And round the pathway they have trod,
Through all the long dark centuries,
Worn pilgrims shall at length see God
In grass and flowers and budding trees.

And like a sudden bugle blown
His challenge wild and sweet shall ring,
Till lips of clay and hearts of stone
And sodden souls shall wake and sing.

Ah, mayhap now he yonder stands
Where tides of traffic part and meet,
His papers in his eager hands—
A newsboy shouting in the street.

THE ECLIPSE

(A Man's Protest)

GLADLY my soul before the pictured Christ
Above the sacred altar would have knelt
In adoration, knowing it sufficed
Only to look on that sad face, to melt
The iron barriers of sin and pride,
And all the heart's fast-bolted doors swing wide.

Thus while the organ's diapason rolled
Through shadowy arch and nave, each wandering
thought,
Each vain desire, each impulse harsh and cold,
Might into swift subjection have been brought;
And silent prayers, breathed from the burdened
breast,
Have won from heaven the balm of peace and rest.

Alas, in vain! the minster's hallowed shrine,
The storied windows' tints, the chanting choir,
Uplifted not; for she, with eyes divine,
Whose downcast lids half quenched their lambent fire,
Worshipped and sang; while I, stark sinner, sat
Eclipsed behind her all obscuring hat,

THE cloudy lilacs still o'erarch the sagged and
creaking gate;
For dancing feet that come no more the weed-choked
blossoms wait;
With sinking roof and shattered panes, and hearth-
stone damp and cold,
The empty house stands in its place, forlorn, and gray,
and old.

Yet once a bride tripped through that door when life
was in its spring;
There children trooped with shouts and songs that made
the echoes ring;
And once—ah, me!—the heavy feet of mourners slowly
passed
Down yon green lane where still the elms their wheel-
ing shadows cast.

The sweep leans o'er the moss-grown well for thirsty
lips in vain;
No windowed lamp through deepening twilight twinkles
forth again;
Fled are the hearts that ached, the busy hands that
toiled are fled,
Gone with the dews that summer drank, the leaves that
autumn shed.

But though the seasons come and pass, and habitations
fail,
And life is spilled in dust like wine from out its
chalice frail,
Yet love is stronger far than death, and howsoe'er it
roam,
Somewhere it finds a resting-place and builds anew its
home.

THE FORGOTTEN WAY

(A Child Gazing Intently Into the Distance)

ART thou still gazing toward that land
From which so lately thou hast fared—
The path still plain where thou dost stand,
O violet-eyed and golden-haired?

Ah, would that we, grown old and wise,
Might see again those shining bowers,
And rest our dim and weary eyes
Upon the hills that once were ours!

But long since we forgot the way
To those dear scenes we used to know,
While ever farther still we stray
Down the dark road our feet must go.

THE SATYR'S THEFT

DIDST thou see him as he fled?
Down this dewy way he sped,
Crashing through the tangled copse,
In a shower of pearly drops
Pattering from the tremulous eaves
Of the pleached and glossy leaves.
See how, in his wild retreat
Through the wood, his flying feet
Crushed the fragile blossoms down;
And those matted shreds of brown
Clinging to yon stunted thorn
From his shaggy vest were torn.
It was in the shady nook,
Where the swift and shallow brook
Spreads abroad its waters clear
In a mimic mountain mere:
Hither she had come to lave
In the cool, pellucid wave;
As she leaned to bathe her face,
Suddenly his rude embrace
Compassed her; his hairy arms
Circled all her snowy charms.
O'er his dusky back and side
Her dark locks outfloated wide,
And I caught a fleeting glance
Of her bosom's fair expanse,

And her features scared and white,
As he vanished from my sight.
Vain it were to follow him
Through the forests deep and dim;
Human eye hath never seen,
Human face hath never been,
Where the satyr's lair is made
Far within some sylvan glade.
There the wild bee winds its horn;
There the breezes, morn by morn,
Bring the balm from unknown flowers;
There through all the poppied hours
Golden light lies on the grass,
And the flickering shadows pass;
But no mortal foot shall tread
Where the satyr makes his bed.

A SOUTH WIND

A ROMPING wind blew from the south,
And woke the dreaming wood;
It kissed the rose's crimson mouth;
Rumpled the poppy's hood;
It crisped the waters of the brook;
Loosed pine-scents on the air;
And round her pallid temples shook
The dead girl's silken hair.

TACITA

SHE roves through shadowy solitudes,
Where scentless herbs and fragile flowers
Pine in the gloom that ever broods
Around her sylvan bowers.

No winds amid the branches sigh,
No footfall wakes the sodden ground;
And the cold streams that hurry by
Flow on without a sound.

Strange, voiceless birds from spray to spray
Flit silently; and all day long
The dancing midges round her play,
But sing no elfin song.

The haunting twilight ebbs and flows;
Chill is the night, wan is the morn;
Through this dim wood no minstrel goes,
No hunter winds his horn.

No panting stag seeks yon dark pool;
No shepherd calls his bleating sheep
From sunburnt meads to shadows cool,
And grasses green and deep.

Across her path, from reed to reed,
The spider weaves his gossamer;
She recks not where her footsteps lead,
The world is dead to her.

Her eyes are sad, her face is pale,
Her head droops sidewise wearily;
Her dusky tresses, like a veil,
Down ripple to her knee.

How many a cycle hath she trod
Each mossy aisle, each leafy dell!
Alas, her feet with silence shod
Ne'er flee the hateful spell!

SALOME

UPON a salver in her rosy palms
She bears the slaughtered prophet's gory head;
Proudly, with placid face and queen-like tread—
Untroubled by a moment's rising qualms
To vex her maiden bosom's happy calms—
She goes where azure wreathes of perfume spread
From smoking censers, and soft lights are shed,
Round halls that throb with tabrets and with shalms.
Now, smiling, at her guilty mother's feet
She lays her gift. . . . Ay, those stern lips are mute
That erstwhile, all unawed before the seat
Of kings, did dare proclaim sin's loathsome fruit;
Yet, hapless woman! o'er thee doom-clouds meet,
And fateful lightnings of God's anger shoot.

DAPHNE

“**W**HICH way went she? Hast thou seen
Any signs where she hath been?
Hast thou marked the trembling grass
Droop where her light feet did pass?
By this woodside did she glide;
In the nooks where she might hide—
In the dingle, in the dell—
Hast thou sought the maiden well?
Haply down the path she fled
Thou mayst find a tell-tale shred
From some bramble fluttering still,
Or beside the shrunken rill,
Where she crossed it at a bound,
Spy her footprints on the ground.
Somewhere she hath stayed her flight;
In some thicket, couched from sight
On brown needles of the pines,
Laughing softly, she reclines.
Listen! didst thou hear o’erhead,
Where the bay’s wide branches spread,
Silver accents faintly fall
Like a murmur musical?
Daphne, cease thy vain elusion;
Leave, my love, thy shy seclusion;
Come whence thou art deftly hiding,
Come nor fear Apollo’s chiding.”

In the laurel's shade he stood,
And his cry rang through the wood.

Then amid the leaves above
Sighed a gentle voice: "O love,
Go thy way—thy search is o'er,
Thou mayst never see me more;
And though, prisoned in this tree,
I can never come to thee,
From Apollo's fierce endeavor
I shall rest secure forever."

SALVE ET VALE

(Robert Browning Died at Venice Dec. 12, 1889)

FRIEND whom I never knew, hail and farewell!
On what far voyage hath thy spirit gone?
What darkling tides, mysterious and lone,
Against thy seaward prow upleap and swell?
What fine immortal strains have hushed the shell
Whercon thou mad'st a music all thine own?
Unto the distant coast whence they were blown,
What voices lure thee with resistless spell?
Lo! from the city's clanging thoroughfares,
From many a kindly face and friendly door,
From dew-wet fields, clear sounds and morning airs,
From all that thou hast loved and sung of yore,
Thou sett'st thy helm, and on thy brave bark bears
Thee to some dim and unimagined shore.

TWO LIVES

ONCE—only once—she listened to the voice
Of the arch-tempter; tender was her heart,
And wiles of sin to her young maidenhood
Were all unknown; her weak defenses broke,
And then her world crashed around her. Argus-eyes
Thronged all the highways, and the hedges swarmed
With Peeping Toms; so with her shame she fled
Into the desert place to shrive her soul.
And there she dwelt obscurely, giving up
Her nights and days to prayer. Cleanly she lived,
Cleanly she wrought. The fresh young morning sang
Tidings to her of healing, and the dusk,
Cool-bosomed, pure, breathed messages of peace.
Thus slipped the years away; forgot of men,
Austere and sweet, she walked on life's high slopes
Alone with God.

Another woman dwelt
In splendor where the great city's endless streets
Throb with the clamor of their myriad life.
And she was fair, with eyes like midnight stars,
And jewels blazed upon her smooth white throat,
And her rich garments rustled as she moved;
But evil, like a serpent, all unseen,
Coiled at her feet, and when with venomous fangs
It struck, struck in the dark. And so the world,
Unwitting, courted her with flattering words,
And in her presence bowed obsequiously.

Like a proud queen, enriching with a smile,
Dishonoring with a frown, imperiously
She swayed her realm. The victims of her lust
Crept silently away to hide their hurts,
And made no sign. Haughtily still she rules,
Glutting desire in secret; fools still fawn
Upon her; still her beauty dazzles all,
But, deep within, her soul is black as death.

ADAM

THE chaste young world gleamed round him;
Paradise

All freshly radiant from the hand of God—
Its dewy ways by human feet untrod—
Revealed its virgin beauties to his eyes.
Above him soared the wondrous turquoise skies;
Beneath his feet rare flowers gemmed the sod;
And in the east he saw the morning, shod
With golden fire, behind the palms arise.
Not yet the Tempter, with his honeyed wiles,
Had entered earth to vex the peace thereof,
But spicy airs roved through the vine-wreathed aisles
And in the laurel cooed the turtle dove;
Still, cold and vain were Eden's balmiest smiles
To lonely Adam—lacking woman's love.

A MAID OF SICILY

SHE heard the waves creep up the sand;
Her hair, by roving sea-winds blown,
And careless of the prisoning band,
Down fluttered to the azure zone
Girt lightly round her perfect form,
And clasped beneath her bosom warm
Which like twin lilies shone.

The dew gleamed on her sandaled feet;
Her clinging robe around her trailed;
Her eyes with morning light were sweet;
And on her brow, that flushed and paled,
As love and fear passed o'er her face,
Was throned a rare and virgin grace,
Such as earth's dawn first hailed.

Her face was seaward turned; her eyes
Looked southward, where the amber light
Was mixed with purple in the skies,
And one fair hand, to shade her sight,
Against her chaste young brow was raised;
And so she stood, and seaward gazed
Across the waters wide and bright.

She saw the level sunrays burn
Along the midsea's heaving breast;
She saw the circling heavens spurn

The utmost billow's tossing crest
Where, on the blue horizon's rim,
A galley's sails rose, white and dim,
And all her blood leaped with unrest.

She knows that sail; love's eyes are keen;
She knows yon dancing bark is his;
From distant coasts where he has been,
From Cyprus, Tyre, and Tripolis,
Her lover brings the alien freight
She prizes not; to those who wait
More precious is love's first warm kiss.

He homeward brings the costly dyes
The Romans love, and nard, and myrrh,
And unguents which the Emperor buys,
And silks, and spice, and fruits which were
Sun-steeped on far Phœnician hills;
But not of these she recks; love fills
Alone the happy heart of her.

So let her watch, while clearer rise
The sails which she has waited long;
The sun climbs higher up the skies;
The sea-wind greets her, salt and strong;
Her robe from one white shoulder slips;
Her breast is bare; and from her lips
Half tremble little waifs of song.

IN ARCADY

UP from yon myrtle valleys incense curls,
Blue in the balmy morning; barefoot girls,
With silvery laughter bubbling, like clear rills,
Forth from their dewy lips, trip up the hills,
Brushing the twinkling jewels from the grass,
That scarcely bends beneath them as they pass.
Bright robes that half reveal their budding charms
Flow lightly round them; and their dimpled arms,
That bear in woven baskets fruits and flowers,
Glow in the sunlight. Yonder are the bowers
Of Ceres, to whose shrine these offerings
Of field and grove each happy maiden brings.
And hither also in the smiling morn
Come goodly youths with braided ears of corn,
And stems of purple grapes and pomegranates,
And shining berries, olives, figs and dates.
Now let the dance begin upon the green,
And while the sound of music drifts between
The pleachéd branches of the leafy wood,
Waking sweet echoes in the solitude,
Let twining hands, light feet, and songs and mirth
Be joined in Ceres' praise, to gifts of earth.
And hark! from height to height the shepherds call;
Adown the hill the laughing waterfall
Leaps to the plain; the bees begin to hum,
And in the glen the partridge beats his drum.

In shady dells, where well the crystal springs,
The naiad laves her limbs and softly sings,
While overhead, from out the oak's thick screen,
The amorous dryad leans to view the scene,
Nor dares to stir a leaf from place, for fear
She sink into the wave and disappear.
Still round the shrine of Ceres, maze on maze,
The dancers featly foot and chant her praise;
The incense upward floats amid the trees
That o'er them stretch their emerald canopies;
Still from the heights the shepherds blithely call
Their bleating flocks; the jocund waterfall,
Flashing the golden sunlight back again,
Still gambols down to seek the amber plain,
And spread abroad its waters clear and cool
That mimic heaven in an azure pool,
Nigh whose fringed marge a drowsy dragon-fly
Upon a lily-leaf sways dreamily,
And Pan, 'mid rushes and rank water-weeds,
To shape some sweeter pipe, still plucks the reeds.

THE POET

THE poet is the heir of every clime;
He gathers spoil from all the years of time;
He reads Fate's holograph with vision clear,
And sees a rainbow smiling in a tear.

THE KING IS DYING

FOOL, stand back, the king is dying,
Give him what little air remains;
See'st thou not how his pulse is flying?
Hear'st thou not how he gasps and strains
To catch one other stertorous breath?
God! how he labors! yes, this is death!

Blow up the fire—his feet are cold;
Ay, though a king, he cannot buy
One briefest moment with all his gold;
His hour has come, and he must die;
Withered and wrinkled, and old and gray,
The king fares out on the common way.

Light the tapers; he's almost gone;
Stir, thou fool, 'tis past the hour
To cower and cringe, and flatter and fawn—
The thing lying there is shorn of power;
Henceforth the lips of the king are dumb:
Bring up thy ghostly viaticum.

Absolve his soul; need enough, God wot!
Mumble and sprinkle and do thy shriving;
Yet, methinks, here and there shall be left a blot,
Hideously foul, despite thy striving;
Nor purfled quilts, nor pillows of lace,
Can relieve the guilt in that grim old face.

Soft! stand back—it is his last;
Get hence, thy priestly craft is o'er;
For him the pomp of the world is past—
The king that was, is king no more:
Let the bells be rung, let the mass be said,
And the king's heir know that the king is dead.

ABANDONED

O'ER the waste fields I hear the fancied sound
Of children's voices—laughter and shrill calls;
Sweetly their clear and childish treble falls
Upon the evening; bare feet sun-embrowned,
Bright eyes and eager faces, cluster round
'Mid deepening twilight, while the vine-grown walls
Smile back the sunset, and the brooklet brawls
Along its shallows from the pasture-ground.
Once more creaks slowly by the laden wain;
Swallows on slanted wings are wheeling low
About the eaves; hints of warm summer rain
Breathe in the air, and the long shadows grow;
But here the children ne'er troop home again
Through gathering dusk, as in the long-ago.

EVENING AT CAPE ANN

HUGE rocks, hurled upward by the angry sea,
Like Titan warriors slain in some fierce fray,
Lie scattered yonder where the billows gray
Leap up and smite each other wrathfully.

Athwart the wet, wide sands the long waves flow,
Tossing and tumbling in tumultous flight;
And far away, through gloom of gathering night,
The shadowy ships on into darkness go.

Hark! o'er the troubled ocean's ceaseless roar,
The lonely crying of the whip-poor-will
Sounds mournfully along the wooded hill
That lifts its solemn brow above the shore.

Night reigns upon the sea and on the land,
Supreme, save where yon beacon shines afar,
As though, ere its last plunge, a falling star
Had been arrested by some mighty hand,

And there forever o'er the restless deep
Poised as a shining hope, while to and fro
The home-bound vessels through the darkness go,
With precious freight for those who watch and weep.

Ah me! one eventide, across the main
Some silent ship shall come, I know not whence,
From these dim shores of life to bear me hence,
And never more to landward fare again.

Well, be it so; let evening take its flight;
To sail that sea I will not hesitate,
Nor question if the time be soon or late,
If so God's beacon shines across the night.

WHEN I AM DEAD

WHEN I am dead, and all life's griefs at last
Forever and forevermore are past,
Though still the green earth wheels its ceaseless round,
While I sleep sweetly in the cool, sweet ground,
I shall not reck if time move slow or fast.

But, O my Love, the deathless love thou hast
Shall move like light above me in the vast
Dim void of death, where breaks nor light nor sound--
When I am dead.

I shall not reck though darkness overcast
The summer sky, or the wild, winter blast
Vex the heaped snows above my lowly mound,
For I shall lie in silence softly wound,
Soothed by the memory of what thou wast--
When I am dead.

THE ENIGMA

A BABE born in a hovel, 'mid the reek
Of pestilent vapors, and the sordid strife
For daily food, scarce knew a mother's care.
And when the little feet had learned to walk
In the foul sunless alley where she dwelt,
Early the dreadful wisdom of the poor
Darkened her childhood, robbing it of joy.
Yet deep within her soul some secret spring
Of heavenly aspiration moved her life
To struggle; with the years her strength increased;
Slowly from out that squalor she emerged,
Grew gracious in sweet ministries, and was blest
With love and honor and the praise of men.

That selfsame day another babe was born
The heir of wealth; nurtured in luxury,
Watched and defended, crowned with loveliness,—
The world its home laid before her feet.
Then suddenly she lost her fair estate,
From her high pedestal slipped once, and fell
Into the vortex, while the world's black scorn
Closed over her forever. Now she dwells
In the foul sunless alley, 'mid the reek
Of pestilent vapors, and from hour to hour,
Lost and undone, craves but a single boon—
To quaff some dark cup of forgetfulness.

GUILLESS EYES

AS within a crystal well,
In her eyes the sunrays dwell;
'Mid their clear, pellucid deeps,
Her untroubled spirit sleeps.
Though the world's wild tempests blow,
Calmly mirrored, far below,
The unwavering image lies
Of the far, o'erarching skies.
There the happy dreams of youth,
Thoughts of purity and truth,
Maiden visions of delight,
Girlhood memories, golden-bright,
That within her soul are born,
Linger like the smiles of morn.
Guileless eyes! O may the years
Dim them not with grief and tears,
May no breath of sin and dole
Mar those mirrors of her soul;
There, as in a crystal well,
May her peaceful spirit dwell.

SQUANDERED

NOT the grim warder of the ebon gate
Wakes sorrow in the dateless realm of night,
But the black memory that it is too late
To win again the squandered hours of light.

A BOOK-PRESSED VIOLET

WHO plucked this faded, scentless thing
From that moist nook wherein it grew,
Kissed by the first mild breath of Spring,
And fed by April sun and dew?

Perchance light fingers touched its meek
Blue petals, as with loving care
It pressed some sick girl's pallid cheek,
Or nestled in her silken hair.

Perchance in language sweet and strange
It spake what words had ne'er expressed—
The gentle love that should not change,
The hopes that budded in the breast.

Where are the hands that placed it here?
Where are the eyes that bent above
This yellowing page with many a tear,
In memory of the old-time love?

Perchance far hence, in alien ways,
Her feet may walk because they must;
Or one by one the circling days
May glide above her sacred dust.

And still the Spring comes as of old,
And still the punctual south-winds blow;
In perfumed aisles the buds unfold,
And on the wood-banks violets grow.

And still the birds flute in the boughs,
Still fields are green and violets blue;
And love repeats its world-old vows,
And some are false, and some are true.

THE AIRMAN

(Flanders, August, 1917)

IN the mid-heaven, as the gray eagle soars
On tireless pinions, watching with fierce eyes
The sunlit valley which beneath him lies,
The ocean's weltering waste which breaks and roars
Against its hoary cliffs, the stream that pours
Its floods adown the steeps, the light that dies
Upon the purple peaks, the bird that flies
Nestward along the river's reedy shores—
So, high above the battle's thunderous din,
The far-trenched fields, the shattered ranks that flee
From the flushed foe, the flames grown pale and thin
O'er burning homes, he hangs expectantly,
Till suddenly on the quarry he would win
He swoops and strikes for God and Liberty.

ECHO'S LAMENT

HERE in the shadows, on my changeless bed
Beneath the somber trees, I long have lain;
Day after day, above my weary head
The sad leaves rustle, and the chilly rain,
Slow dripping from each gnarled and twisted bough,
Shatters its big drops on my flinty brow.

The tangled brakes decay about my feet;
The shaggy moss creeps o'er my rigid face;
Afar I hear the young flocks faintly bleat,
And baying hounds upon the frantic chase;
But none make quest for me; the years go by,
And still amid these hateful glooms I lie.

Ah! when the large, cool-breasted Night hath drawn
Her star-wrought mantle from the waking world,
And on the hills, where gleam the feet of Dawn,
The trailing banners of the mist are furled,
Then, O Narcissus, while the woodlands ring,
Dost thou not miss me by thy silver spring?

And when, at noon, on murmurous summer days,
O'er thymy meadows drone the yellow bees—
When shy wild creatures frisk through leafy ways,
And fragrant blossoms clasp thy dimpled knees—

Then, as thou bendest o'er thy fountain clear,
And look, and yearn, dost thou not wish me near?

Deep in this twilight solitude I dwell,
And as the languid seasons wax and wane,
I know the thralldom of my stony spell
Shall ne'er be banished, nor my heart's old pain;
But, O my love, no lightest breeze shall blow
About thy path that shall not breathe my woe.

ON A FLY LEAF OF DANTE

LET whoso enters here remember well,
That nevermore with unanointed eyes,
Shall he to whom the palms of Paradise
Have waved a welcome, and the streets of Hell
Flamed with red terrors, walk where mortals dwell;
Henceforth he shall behold dim mysteries
In common things, and how men's destinies—
Love, hope and death—from obscure founts upwell.
Thus was it that, with vision sadly keen,
From shadowy realms of unimagined pain,
From sun-crowned heights of joy where thou hadst
 been,
Unto this babbling world thou cam'st again;
But always on thy woe, O Florentine,
Thy saint's sweet memory fell like summer rain.

THE TYRIAN'S MEMORY

WHAT stars were kindled in the skies,
What blossoms bloomed, what rivers ran,
I know not now; how wide the span
Of years which dimly stretch between
That morn I saw the big sun rise,—
Blinking upon the dazzling sheen
Of banners in the Grecian van,—
And this, no tongue shall tell, I ween.

On helm and shield, on sword and spear,
The sun shone down exultingly;
No son of Tyre knew how to flee
Before the face of any foe,
Nor would our women shed a tear,
Though face to face with speechless woe,
And heart to heart with misery;
For *fear* a Tyrian could not know.

There came the sound of clashing arms,
Of catapults and falling stones.
Of shouts and shrieks, and stifled groans,
While men stood on the crumbling wall,
And recked not of the dire alarms,
But saw their brave compatriots fall
And heard the crunching of their bones,
Then closed with death, unheeding all.

I know not how the battle fared,
Though Tyre, "the ocean queen," is dead,
And lowly lies her crownless head,
Amid the ashes of her pyre.
Few were the warriors that were spared
The spear, the flying dart, the fire;
Into my heart an arrow sped—
My eyes were closed on falling Tyre.

I have forgot how tenderly
The olive ripened on the hill;
How sweetly, when the nights were still,
The nightingale sang in the grove;
How soft the moon was on the sea,
How low the mourning of the dove;
For my dead heart no memories thrill,
Save the glad memory of love.

O, like the footsteps of the morn
Her footsteps gleamed along the street;
Her shining, foam-white, sandaled feet
Fell lightly as the summer rain
On stones which grosser feet had worn;
And, but my heart so long has lain
In ashes, it would wake and beat
At thought of meeting her again.

Her hair was dark as Egypt's night;
Her breasts shone like twin nenuphars;
Her brave eyes burned like Syrian stars
That morn she pressed her lips to mine,

And bade me forth unto the fight;
My blood shot through my veins like wine;
I felt myself another Mars—
In thew, in life, in love divine.

Who knows that on the emerald zone
Which belts the changeless azure sea
Another city yet may be,
More fair than Tyre? Nathless, I wis,
Howe'er the phantom years have flown.
The wrinkled world must ever miss
That Tyrian maid who gave to me
Her first, her last, her farewell kiss.

THE TRAVELER

WHEN in the dark we slowly drift away
O'er unknown seas, and busy thoughts at last
Are quieted, and all the cares are past
That, bandit-like, infest the realms of day—
To what pale country does the spirit stray?
Within what wan-lit land, what region vast,
Does this strange traveler journey far and fast,
Till in the east the day breaks, cold and gray?
Ah, tell me, when we slumber, whither goes,
And whence at waking comes, the silent guest,
Whose face no man hath seen, whom no man knows—
The dim familiar of each human breast?
Behold, at length, when day indeed shall close,
Will this uneasy traveler, too, have rest?

BACCHUS

COME, satyrs, from the arbored vine;
Silenus, leave the shady wood;
And quit, O Pan, the reedy flood,
And those shrill, silly pipes of thine.

Ho! shepherds, leave beside the spring
The chaste, cold nymph, and on the hill
Thy nibbling flocks let rove at will;
Come down to laugh, and dance and sing.

Here lissome maids, with lifted arms
And dangled clusters, lightly trip;
Here laughter wreathes each rosy lip;
Here beauty half unveils her charms.

Ye know me well; my stained mouth
My rounded limbs, my tangled hair,
My supple body, smooth and fair,
My cheeks like summers of the south;

I am the vintage god; I go
Where'er the grape's blood gurgles through
The fat-ribbed press. O merry crew,
Come while the purple vats o'erflow!

A HUNDRED YEARS

SHE stands beside the sylvan stream,
The chief's one daughter, lithe and fair,
And, as she stands, a last late gleam
Of light lies tangled in her hair.

The boughs droop down above her face,
The grasses kiss her naked feet,
And one tall reed leans from its place,
To touch her bosom warm and sweet.

Behind her lies the quiet camp,
Before her the calm waters flow,
She sees the firefly light its lamp,
She hears the night-wind, faint and low.

The sunset dies upon the hill,
The valley fades in deepening gloom,
But where she stands, her presence still
Sheds on the shadows light and bloom.

She looks away into the west,
Her eyes brim o'er with happy light,
A song upbubbles from her breast,
She scarcely heeds the falling night.

But hark! a paddle softly dips;
A swift hand thrusts the leaves apart;
The song is hushed upon her lips,
While sudden tumult shakes her heart.

For lo! he stands before her now—
Her lover, young and strong and brave,
Above whose dark and fearless brow
The plumes of eagles proudly wave.

A hated warrior's valiant son,
Though years of feud have sundered wide
His sire from hers, has wooed and won
The dusky maiden for his bride.

A clinging kiss, a passionate word,
A lingering doubtful look behind;
Low pleadings that are hardly heard,
And eyes with tears confused and blind.

Then silent steps that do not pause;
Then long light dippings of an oar;
A boat into the darkness draws,
And fades from sight forevermore—

Fades and is gone: a hundred years
Have passed since that dim summer night
When, half in triumph, half in tears,
These lovers vanished out of sight.

And now beside that self-same stream,
With many a clustering bough above,
I lie and dream a world-old dream,
Beneath the eyes of her I love.

AFTER A FRAGMENT OF SAPPHO'S

SOFTLY, passer, softly tread,
Here lies Timas who is dead;
Ere her bridal robe was made,
For the tomb she was arrayed.
When she died, with tender care
All the virgins dressed their hair,
Reaping from each lovely head
Curls for strewments o'er her bed.

THE NIGHT-ANGEL

(For a Picture)

O ANGEL of the dark—through vistas dim,
O'erhung with purple shadows of the night,
Where swarming stars like multitudinous bees
Hum round the vast and hollow arch of heaven—
On tireless pinions thou dost ever sweep,
Secure from change. Me time shall surely bear
To falling limbs, scant breath, and eyes that peer
Through mists which gather in the evening fields—
But thou shalt ever spread thy flowing robes,
Spangled with constellations never quenched,
About thy fresh young form, and evermore
Thine arms outstretched shall sift from rosy palms
The dews that slake a million thirsty blooms.
When earth to her warm bosom shall receive

The mold that once hath wrapt this vital spark—
As embers hid in ashes on the hearth—
When reels my forehead dustward, thou shalt be
Fair as that hour when first thy gemmy brow
Took the cool kisses of the twilight breeze,
And all the naked world did welcome thee.
Let me grow old and die—it shall be well;
Though I forget love's steadfast eyes that burn
Like planets in their spheres, and love's sweet lips
Whose music jangling voices cannot vex,
I shall remember in the scented gloom,
Where flowers braid their roots, that thou dost keep
Thy flight along the highways of the dusk
Forever lovely, and I shall be glad.

OPPORTUNITY

WITH rustling wings she swept from heaven and
stood
Beside me where I loitered in the way.
Her brow was calm, and in her outstretched hand
She bore a gift—a virgin bud that blushed
Disparting its green sheath. The restless motes
Danced round me in the shimmering light, the while
I wantoned through the day. She spake no word,
But paused a little space and looked at me
With silent scorn; then plumed her shining vans
In sudden flight, nor ever came again.

SANBENETTO

AND will ye clothe us thus in shame?
Think ye the scarlet vestures meet?
Shall they not perish in the flame
That shall be kindled at our feet?

Yea, shall these hateful robes withstand
The fiery floods that, high and higher,
Shall round us roll, as with fierce hand
Ye thrust the roaring fagots nigher?

Or, who shall say that—while ye cry
Down, Antichrist!" and mock the sight
Of our last sufferings—as we die,
These may not change to robes of light?

ATAVISM

AY, it was so, to the dusk river-side
Glided an Indian girl, lithe as a fawn,
The while, half-naked, bow in hand I crouched
Low in the rushes, stirring not a leaf
And scarcely breathing, as she softly stept
Into her slim canoe and shot it forth
Straight as an arrow on its noiseless path;
Then mist and darkness quenched her like a star,
And all my wild heart's longing followed her.
This was a thousand years ago, and yet
My blood leaps with the flame of that old love.

THE NEW POET

HE comes not, though we tarry long;
He comes not—and the noon is near;
The anxious world awaits his song;
Men hush their very hearts to hear.

The morning, pearled with dew and rain,
In raiment light as mists that pass,
Peered tiptoe through her vines in vain
To see his footsteps star the grass.

And still the orphaned hour's take wing;
The languid earth can scarce rejoice
Mid buds that blow and birds that sing,
Lacking the witchery of his voice.

Yet we may pass him where he stands
Smiled on by the benignant skies,
Fresh daisies in his sun-browned hands—
A homeless lad with dreamy eyes.

ON THE REVIVAL OF THE ELIZABETHANS

NEW voices twittering in the ear of Time
Hush the full-throated songs we knew of yore;
But morn returns again, as in its prime,
To wake the old sweet minstrelsy once more.

IMOGEN IN THE CAVE OF BELARIUS

*"I am sick still, heartsick. Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug."—Cymbeline.*

WHAT is this that o'er me steals—
Death, or death's sweet counterfeit;
What is this my bruised heart feels
That medicines the grief of it?
Softly, softly let me lie,
If I sleep, or if I die.

Not the obscene things of night
Beat with bat-like wings the gloom—
Seraphs in hushed downward flight
Narrow towards my rocky room;
And the head of each fair one
Wears a halo like the sun.

Exhalations from the grave
Steep not yet my closing eyes;
Round this ribbed and flinty cave
Very dew of heaven lies;
And cool strewnments, fresh as May,
Keep the virgin smiles of day.

Sad and weary was I grown—
Peace the dove now warms my breast;
Wintry winds have on me blown—
Zephyrs now breathe round my rest;
At my feet and at my head
Gentle warders watch my bed.

And, if haply, lying here,
To me *he* should somehow come,
O'er me he might shed a tear
For the orphaned lips struck dumb;
Or, in memory of past bliss,
On my forehead lay his kiss.

But I reckon not what may be;
Couched within this crypt-like place,
Let the furred moss cover me,
Ruddocks mask with leaves my face;
Softly, softly shall I lie,
If I sleep, or if I die.

THE PROPHET'S END

BBETTER to hide the weary face awhile;
Better to let them have it as they will;
They would but mock thee, scourge thee, harry still
Thy tired soul; go, cease thee from thy toil.
Flee from these dim vain ways where millions moil,
And wrangle for a bauble; let them fill
Each other's restless lives with strenuous ill—
Thou shalt be free at last from strife and guile.
Go to thy mother, child, and take thy sleep;
Go, lay thee, silent, in her cool wide arms;
Secure from troublous time, in her large keep
Thou shalt lie peaceful 'mid the world's alarms;
Go, get thee to thy mother-earth, and creep
Into her bosom, where no evil harms.

EVOLUTION

THE dull brute reveled in primeval slime;
Then to a naked soul the Lord said, "Go,
Dwell yonder in that groveling flesh till time
O'er the sloped forehead make love's whiteness flow."

So to the beast went down the unclothed soul,
Abode in twilight, wallowed in the mire,
Writhed in the serpent, burrowed with the mole,
Till the dim eons waked it to aspire.

Then up through tortuous shapes it rudely grew,
Saw the long night expand into the day,
Found its own self, and round it slowly drew
A human vestment from the sullen clay.

And still it grows past what the eye can see;
Climbs austere peaks of hope to breathe Heaven's air
Above the refuse of mortality,
Nor frets to know what form it yet shall wear.

JOHN DAVIDSON

HE walked unheeded mid the motley throng;
He sang betimes, but none would give him ear;
Death, passing, touched his lips and hushed his song,
When lo! too late the world awoke to hear.

THE LAST SHELTER

THE light of hope dawned in her girlish eyes,
As morning smiles in the pellucid skies—
O bliss of life!

A shadow fell, hope's light died in eclipse,
And hands of flame to anguish touched her lips—
O bane of love!

Now in the inviolate dark she lies at rest,
While tides of peace brood o'er her tranced breast—
O longed-for night!

In vain the world's shrill blasts above her rave,
Rumors of shame sweep harmless round her grave—
O friendly death!

RECOMPENSE

HILL is the hollow dark,
And the night long,
Still the dawn cometh, hark!
Somewhere a song.

Rough is the way we go,
And the heart sore,
Still the night cometh, lo!
Rest lies before.

A ROMAN QUEEN

IMPERIOUS on her ebon throne
She sits, a queen, in languid ease;
Her lustrous locks are loosely blown
Back from her brow by some stray breeze
Lost in that vast, bright hall of state,
Where thronging suppliants fear and wait.

A dreamy fragrance, fine and rare,
Of sandal, nard and precious gum,
With balmy sweetness fills the air,
And mingles with the incense from
A quaint and costly azure urn,
Where Indian spices ever burn.

A jeweled serpent, wrought in gold,
Coils round her white and naked arm;
Her purple tunic, backward rolled,
Reveals the full and regal charm
Of her fair neck and ivory breast,
Half veiled beneath her brodered vest.

Her eyelids droop upon her eyes,
And curtained by the silken lash,
The smouldering fire that in them lies
Is scarcely seen, save when a flash,
Like that which lights the polar snow,
Gleams from the dusky depths below.

Her proud, cold lips are lightly wreathed
In smiles, as if with high disdain

She scorns to show her hate is sheathed,
And that he sues not all in vain
For favors of her haughty will,
Or e'en love's rarer guerdon still.

He stands before her white and fierce;
His bosom with swift passion shakes;
His burning vision seeks to pierce
Her very soul; he pleads; he wakes
Within her heart a wild desire,
That flames and mounts like sudden fire.

A subtle glance, a whispered word,
A waving of her perfumed hand,
He feels his secret prayer is heard—
That she will know and understand;
The queen is hid, and for a space
A love-swayed woman holds her place.

He bows, he leans toward the throne;
Her breath is warm upon his cheek;
She murmurs, and in every tone
He hears the love she dares not speak;
What though the surging hundreds press?
No eye shall see her swift caress.

Let him beware, he toys with fate;
False as the glittering serpent is
On her white arm, her love to hate
Shall change eftsoons; then every kiss
She gives him with her fickle breath
Shall be surcharged with secret death.

SONG FOR THE SLAIN

LIFT and drift, O mists, away;
River, sing amid thy reeds;
Break, O silver light of day,
And across the dewy meads
On the grasses and the weeds
Make their million jewels gleam;
Tip the waves on every stream
With thy swift and sudden fire,
And, where leaves of forests dream,
Strike the wind's invisible lyre,
Wake the morning's wingéd choir,
Till the raptured earth shall be
Drenched with showers of melody.

O how good it is to live!
O how sweet this vital breath!
Precious are the days that give
Warm release from winter's death,
Till with every bud set free
On the south-kissed shrub and tree,
And with every springing flower
Fed by April sun and shower,
In our own hearts blossom fair
Hopes we never knew were there.

Still our joy is mixed with pain
For the faces that are fled—
O the spring breathes all in vain
O'er the barrows of our dead!

They shall never waken more
To the battle's sullen roar,
To the smoke and lurid flash,
To the frenzied shout and clash.
'Round them never shall again
Tides of combat sweep the plain.
Whistling shot and screaming shell;
Flames that seem to leap from hell;
Gory hoofs of many a steed
Trampling wounded men who plead,
Shrick, and pray while none take heed;
Muddy streams whose waters flow
Bloody-dark, and thick and slow;
Upturned faces here and there,
Bearded, bronzed, or young and fair,
Now grown strangely still and white
While around them swells the fight;
Tattered flags and scattered arms;
Fleeing men whom vague alarms,
Seizing in the conflict's surge,
To some hidden refuge urge—
From such scenes their eyes are sealed;
Death has won and holds the field.

Never shall the bugle-sound
Call them from their sleep profound,
To behold with smoke-dimmed eyes
How a comrade falls and dies,
Smitten by the leaden hail,
Or the cannon's iron flail.
From the cheerful bivouac fires;

From home-songs and home-desires;
From the dark and silent camp;
From the night-mists, chill and damp;
From soft dreams of child and wife—
Of the old and happy life—
Of the pasture-lands of home
Where the tranquil cattle roam—
Of the brawling brook where played
Barefoot urchins in the shade—
Of the dear, mild mother's face
That bent o'er them in the place
Where their childish prayers were said
When the joyous day had fled—
Of the maid whose timid eyes
Smiled through tears her fond replies
To the questions old and sweet,
While the blossoms at her feet
(Fragrant still in memory)
Were not half so fair as she—
From such dreams they shall not start,
With fierce tuggings at the heart,
Still the weary march to share,
Or into the battle's blare
With a wild and nameless pain
Go to slay and to be slain.

Let them rest where nodding clover
Covers husband, friend and lover,
Where the long cool grass leans over,
And the stars their watches keep;
Where with drowsy murmurings

Haunt the bees with tireless wings;
Where all night the cricket sings,
Let them sleep.

No more shall the loud alarms
From their grassy tents on the hill
Summon the sleepers to arms;
But the sunshine, warm and still,
Shall sift through the fronded palm.
From the blue-domed southern sky,
To nestle through hours of calm
O'er the sod where the brave ones lie,
Unknown in their narrow bed,
Asleep with the world's great dead.

And O, bend low, ye North's pale skies,
O'er many a humble stone
That marks where some true man lies
Till the angel's trump be blown;
To-day as in love bend low!
Soft be the suns and the showers,
And light be the winds that blow,
Over these heroes of ours.

Ah! Memory, let the world forget
Her deeds of darkness and of shame,
But while the sun shall rise and set,
A thousand thousand years the same,
Keep bright the glory and renown
Of those who fought by land and sea,
Brave men who laid their brave lives down,
That man might still be free.

Ye widowed hearts, your bitter tears
Through all the long and lonely years
God hath regarded, for He hears
The troubled when they cry;
Your loss becomes the world's rich gain;
Henceforth above your noble slain
The seed once sown in tears and pain
Shall bloom in liberty.

A SEA GRAVE

YEA, rock him gently in thine arms, O deep!
No nobler heart was ever hushed to rest
Upon the chill, soft pillow of thy breast—
No truer eyes didst thou e'er kiss to sleep.
While o'er his couch the wrathful billows leap,
And mighty winds roar from the darkened west,
Still may his head on thy cool weeds be pressed,
Far down where thou dost endless silence keep.
Oh, when, slow moving through thy spaces dim,
Some scaly monster seeks its coral cave,
And pausing o'er the sleeper, stares with grim
Dull eyes a moment downward through the wave,
Then let thy pale green shadows curtain him,
And swaying sea-flowers hide his lonely grave.

REQUIESCAT

SHE sleeps, and may her peaceful rest
Unbroken be;
The flowers that nod above her breast
She can not see;
To warbling bird, to purling brook,
Deaf are her ears;
Scaled is the volume of the book
Of her brief years.
So let her rest; she will not heed
The tales they tell;
She recks not now of word or deed—
She slumbers well.

A NOVEMBER GRAVE

The gray clouds gather, fold on fold,
Above the blurred and dripping wold;
The light is growing pale and cold,
And ghostly mists steal o'er the plain.
A robin in the elm is crying;
About the eaves the wind is sighing;
O dismal day! my heart is lying
In yon fresh grave drenched with the rain.

JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

PRETTY Annie Atherton (why is her face so pale?)
Stands on the rocky headland yonder, watching
for a sail;

The sky is gray and lowering, all night the wind has
blown,
And round the dreary shore the breakers moan, and
moan, and moan.

She has not slept through all the hours—her heart has
ached with fears,
And in her lonely chamber she has sat, and through
her tears
Has watched for tardy dawn to light at last the
darkened east;
And now the morn is come, and still the tempest has
not ceased.

'Twas yestereve she lightly laughed and said a blithe
“good-bye”—
The wind was soft, the sea was calm, and cloudless
was the sky;
Ah, how the storm-rack suddenly drave o'er the shud-
dering sea!
God pity those brave toilers now, wherever they may
be!

Pretty Annie Atherton—she heeds not how her hair
Is rudely tossed and tangled on the gusty headland
there;
She heeds not how the salt wind smites, nor how her
gown is blown;
She only hears the cruel breakers moan, and moan,
and moan.

O'er all the deep the white-caps leap: "O love," her
brave heart cries,
"I wait thee as I promised thee"—the wind alone
replies;
Yet see! a sudden sail speeds up the offing, dim and
gray—
O'er all the deep the white-caps leap—alas! 'tis flying
spray.

Pretty Annie Atherton—her eyes with mist are blind;
The breakers moan—she does not hear the swift light
step behind;
He nearer draws—the wind is harsh, and heavy are
her ears;
Now fold and hold her close, strong arms—love, kiss
away love's fears.

A WIFE

NO angel she; she hath no budding wings;
No mystic halo circles her bright hair;
But lo! the infinite grace of little things,
Wrought for dear love's sake, makes her very fair.

THE BURDEN OF ÆDON

WHEN the twilight, cool and dim,
Wraps the hushed, leaf-curtained limb,
While the slant rays of the sun
Climb the branches one by one,
Till each topmost bough, like fire,
Upward shoots its slender spire,
Then I grieve, and hear again
The faint sobbing of my slain.

Doomed to beat with pinions bright
'Round the dazzling fields of light,—
Every troubled cry I make
(Lest my burdened heart should break)
Heard of shepherds o'er and o'er
As a song and nothing more,—
To the night I turn for peace
And my sorrow's brief surcease.
Yet whene'er I fold my wings,
From the shadowy silence springs
Still that haunting voice of pain,
The faint sobbing of my slain.

All things sunny welcome me,—
Fruited vine and breezy bee,
Thickets where pale violets hide,
Thymy banks with blossoms pied,

Prosperous meads where sickles flash,
Fountains whose cool waters plash
'Mid the seamed and mossy rocks
Where the shepherds wash their flocks.
Hateful—hateful—hateful all!
Still I long for night to fall,
Night that comes with nameless fear,
When amid the leaves I hear,
O'er the cold and misty plain,
The faint sobbing of my slain.

AFTER THE BATH

NOW the swart slave-girls bring their perfumes
sweet,
And lightly sprinkle all her lustrous hair,
Her supple neck, her ivory breast half-bare,
Her glowing limbs, and e'en her pink-white feet.
Languid she leans against the cushioned seat,
While one white hand along the ebon chair
Wanders to stroke the pard-skin lying there;
Upon her eyes the jetty lids half meet.
What dreams she of, now that the bath is done,
The unguents ended, and the cool robe brought?
Of lovers? Nay—again beneath the sun
She sees the red arena's sands upcaught
In wild beasts' bloody jaws, and one by one
The gladiators dying where they fought.

NORA

SHE stands in the light of the setting sun,
Till the bright bars vanish, one by one,

And the stars are hung in the azure dome,
Like lamps, to guide lost spirits home.

Thus she has watched through the weary years,
Through moments of hope and months of tears—

Watched at twilight pale and gray,
While ever the slow years crept away—

Watched and waited for one to come
Back, over the wide wild prairie, home.

He went when her cheek was fresh and fair,
And the sunlight slept in her yellow hair;

When her eyes were blue, and her lips were red—
As sweet a bride as was ever wed.

But now she is old and wrinkled and gray,
For the years have fretted her beauty away,

And dim are her eyes that were once so blue,
Yet her love is loyal, her heart is true.

So she waits and waits while the sun goes down,
And over the prairie, naked and brown,

The shadows come stealing, big and black;
For he said, "Wait, Nora, till I come back,"

And he passed away through the gathering gloom,
Away o'er the prairie, rich with bloom—

Whistling he passed through the deepening dusk,
Through the twilight sweet with the scent of musk—

To seek the kine that had gone astray;
But he never returns by night or day.

"Ah~me! Ah me!" she softly saith,
While her blue eyes shine with a mystic faith,

"He seeketh far, he seeketh yet,
But he will come back, he will not forget."

So day after day, as the night draws on,
She stands and waits at her door alone—

Waits while the sun sinks out of sight,
And she stands alone with the vast dim night.

Ah, yes! ah, yes! he hath gone afar
For where the tremulous evening star

Gleams like a gem o'er the heart of the west,
He fell on sleep, on sleep and rest—

On sleep that is sweeter than we know here,
On rest unvexed by hope or fear.

Above his lowly and lonesome grave,
The long, strong grass and wild flowers wave,

And the shadows of morning and evening play,
While he slumbers the years of her waiting away.

But lo! one evening when sunset burns,
And in patient sorrow she waits and yearns,

Up from the shadowy earth he shall rise,
Like an angel of light to her dying eyes,

And shall touch her hand and say, "Love, come,
Behold, the dear Christ calls us home;"

For the ties of love that here are riven,
God will unite again in Heaven.

HEROES

THE prize of valor in the sanguine fray
Is sculptured epitaph or ponderous tome,
And for one brief and evanescent day
A name familiar grown in every home.

OMAR KHAYYAM

AH, shed long since the roses that he knew,
And fled the perfume and the morning dew;
And dead the vine from out whose purple fruit
Refreshment for his fading life he drew.

As when some awkward slave lets fall the shape
Of clay she bears, and through the rents agape
The precious liquid pours, so careless Death
Broke the frail jar and let his soul escape.

Along the garden where his feet did pass,
The steps of aliens bruise the springing grass;
And not one careless eye hath noted how
Still on the turf lies an inverted glass.

There at dim nightfall, when the moon is pale,
Within the laurel sings the nightingale;
And through the gathering darkness, from the ground
Elusive breaths of fragrant wine exhale.

CHARACTER

NOT in soft dreams of pleasure is it wrought,
Nor is it forged in hours of slothful thought,
But in the furnace heat of strenuous years
Time shapes its grace and tempers it with tears.

ET EGO IN ARCADIA

I HAVE been there; I've seen the clear
Blue hills through lucent atmosphere,
Bright streams that babbled mid their ferns,
Fair lilies lifting fragrant urns.
And I, from blossom-covered trees,
Have heard the sound of gathering bees,
Of birds that shook their dewy breast
With song beside the waiting nest.
In the cool shadows of the rocks
Oft have I watched the sleeping flocks,
The while the shepherd, with his crook
Against his knee, beside the brook
Fashioned with skillful hand, at need,
His panpipes from the whispering reed.
And down the wood-paths long and dim,
From the dark fountain's fringed brim
On each round arm a dripping jar,
Their happy laughter borne afar,
With white feet twinkling in the grass,
I've seen the smooth-limbed maidens pass.
When morn with tongues of arrowy fire
Has tipped the fir tree's slender spire,
Through ivied doors the doves have wheeled,
The laboring wains have rolled afield,
While from the stooks the reaper's song
Echoed the rustling aisles along.

And when beneath the rosy skies
The evening brought its lullabies,
I've heard, in accents sweet and mild,
A mother crooning o'er her child,
Her every heart-beat a dumb prayer
For the dear being pillowed there.
And I have heard the night wind sigh,
And seen the low stars burning nigh,
And caught the firefly's wizard spark
Out-struck amid the perfumed dark.
These have I seen—the secret gold
Where curves the rainbow's radiant fold,
The mountain's cleft whence leaps the spring,
The fays that foot their moonlight ring—
Things ever seen of children's eyes
Ere grown age-blurred and weary-wise—
Things which the anointed still may see;
I, too, have been in Arcady.

THE HEARLEQUIN

WHO laughs in motley to the crowded court,
And makes for idle days an idle sport,
May teach us yet, in life's impartial school,
'Tis we wear asses' ears and play the fool.

HYMN FOR THE EMPIRE STATE

O EMPIRE of the pastoral hills,
Of prosperous fields and winding streams,
Of fruitful slopes and flashing rills.

Thy rich and ample bosom teems
With generous stores of corn and wine,
Bestowments of the Hand Divine.

'Mid happy vales thy lakes lie pearly;
Like children, cities crowd thy knees;
Thy smoky banners are unfurled
Each morn to those vast symphonies
Of forge and anvil where still ply
The hammers of thine industry.

Thy punctual harvests shall not cease;
Thy rivers never shall run dry;
On thee shall fall the dews of peace
From evening's hushed, impartial sky,
To plenish still thy patient soil,
And bless the hands of honest toil.

And lo! the world brings to thy feet
Its wealth o'er multitudinous seas;
Within thy council chambers meet
Sovereigns and powers and dignities;
Yet not of these thy state is won,
But of thine every worthy son.

May justice rule within thy halls;
Redress be thine for every wrong;
Love dwell within thy humblest walls;
The weak be girded by the strong;
So shalt thou bear without a stain
The scutcheon of thy proud domain.

TREAD LIGHTLY

TREAD lightly, Love, lest thou shouldst break my
sleep;

Tread lightly o'er the turf above my head;
I would my slumbers should be still and deep,
While nature drapes her greenery round my bed.

Come not too often, lest thou vex my rest;
The grass-blades crinkling 'neath thy passing feet
Would wake an echo in my hollow breast,
And somewhere in the dust my heart would beat.

The nesting birds shall warble over me,
And in the clover, o'er my placid face,
Through long bright afternoons the reveling bee
Shall sound his pipe about the quiet place,

I'll follow some sweet dream through many a maze,
While suns and seasons o'er me slowly glide;
And when at length thou leav'st the world's fair ways,
I'll wake and softly fold thee to my side.

LACONIA

(B. C. 480)

BENEATH the summer stars they part;
No weak and unavailing tear
Shall from her down-dropt lashes start,
In token of the nameless fear,
The hopeless pain, the bitter smart,
That storm the white gates of her heart.

Dark braided tresses, soft and fine;
Sweet eyes that love hath made more sweet;
Warm, dimpled lips as red as wine;
And in the sward her naked feet,
Half hid by woven flower and vine,
Pale through the balmy darkness shine.

The glimmering dew is on the grass;
The distant sea moans in the night;
The vagrant breezes sigh and pass;
The folded flocks bleat on the height;
But naught can charm them now; alas,
Earth is not fair as once it was!

For they must part; beyond the hills,
Beyond the blue Corinthian sea,
Past Dorian steeps that flash with rills,
O'er vine-clad fields of Thessaly,
He fares to where the war-cry thrills,
Where courage dies, and hatred kills.

His heart is brave; he loves his land;
He answers valor's high behest;
But, oh! he loves the warm white hand
He holds against his aching breast.
Ah, 'twixt what thorny ways they stand!
How stern is duty swift command!

A kiss, a sigh, a low farewell;
He fades into the misty dark,
And faint and fainter down the dell
His footsteps fall: she waits to hark—
While in her heart strange passions swell—
How from the wood grieves philomel.

FINIS

NOW his long day's work is done,
Fold his palms upon his breast;
Sweet the sleep which he hath won—
Come away and let him rest.

He hath toiled amid the tares;
He hath given of his best;
Now he hath surcease from cares—
Come away and let him rest.

Scant his wage through weary years;
He hath broke the crust unblest;
Quaffed the cup of bitter tears;
But at last God gives him rest.

AN AUTUMN BALLAD

PERHAPS I loved him better than the others—who
shall tell?

But he was always a good boy and made me love
him well;

He was not like my Robert, nor was he like my
Will,

His ways were always different—so steady, true, and
still.

I mind me how he left me on that shining autumn
day;

The corn was shocked upon the hill, where the yellow
pumpkins lay;

The apples fell from loaded boughs, the fields were
green and fair,

And plenty, peace, and happiness breathed in the earth
and air.

He stood against the mellow light within the open
door;

His shadow wavered through my tears along the sunny
floor,

To where I sat and sobbed, as if my lonely heart
would break,

For he was last to leave me—he had tarried for my
sake.

His eyes were dim and tearful, and his voice was
broken, slow;
"It is my duty, mother," he said, "that I should
go;
The government has need of men; I go to fill my
place;
'Tis better I should go to death than stay and win
disgrace."

He turned and left me, for he could not speak an-
other word,
But as he passed the garden gate a stifled sob I
heard.
In strange bewilderment I rose and looked upon the
day;
There in the sunlight danced the rill by which he used
to play.

I heard the sound of marching feet, I heard the bugle
blow;
And through my open door I saw the soldiers come
and go;
A face I knew, a face I loved, flashed by me, still and
white,
And passed, though then I knew it not, forever from
my sight.

What need to tell the weary while of anxious nights
and days
That followed? On the peaceful hills I saw the cattle
graze;

The misty sunshine, warm and soft, lay on the golden
leaf,
But not on that dark heart of mine, so bowed and
full of grief.

It came full soon, the cruel blow, ere scarce a month
was gone,
And he, my boy, my best beloved, who I had leaned
upon,
Forth from the carnage and the strife, the murderous
blare and heat,
Was brought, the war's first offering, and laid before
my feet.

I could not look on his dead face, I could not moan
nor weep,
When, wrapped within his country's flag, they bore
him to his sleep;
There, day and night, beside his grave goes rippling
down the rill,
And there the last late sunbeam lingers on the pleasant
hill.

My Robert and my Will came back; they are good
boys to me,
But somehow in my life there is a dreary vacancy;
I miss his step, I miss his voice, his quiet ways I
miss,
And daily on my lips it seems I yet must feel his
kiss.

The seasons go their wonted round; through all the
autumn days,
The dreamy earth lies lightly swathed within an amber
haze;
But never come such days to me as when, in that old
year,
The world was beautiful to me because my boy was
here.

Perhaps I loved him better than the others—who shall
tell?
But he was always a good boy and made me love
him well;
And since I know that he has gone to come again no
more,
It seems that he is nearer far, and dearer than
before.

MOONLIGHT

THROUGH night's dim gulfs a silver radiance falls;
On dreaming wood and city square it lies;
It streams along yon attic's naked walls,
To kiss a child's starved face and sightless eyes.

CERES

SUN-TANNED she sits amid the sheaves;
Above her lisp the cooling leaves;
Beside her feet her sickle shines,
Half-hid by woven weeds and vines.
Her dusky tresses ripple down
About her arms, which, bare and brown,
Are clasped across her knees; her eyes,
Wherein a dreamy shadow lies,
Look out athwart the shimmering field
Where stalwart, swart-armed reapers wield
Their flashing blades, and laugh and sing,
Till all the pleachéd copeses ring.
The fruit of long desires she sees
Wave golden in the rustling breeze;
Hers was the bounteous, unseen hand
That morn by morn across the land
Scattered the generous dews and rains,
Till over all the amber plains,
And up and down the purple slopes,
Dimpled the joy of harvest hopes;
So now she sits with task nigh done,
The while the mellow autumn sun
Beholds the consummation fair
Of all her labor and her care.

And well content she hears the song
Trolled by the reapers all day long,
And sees the tireless sickles glance
Amid the grain; the votive dance
She knows full well shall circle soon
Beneath the ruddy harvest moon,
When lissome limbs and tripping feet,
And twining hands that part and meet,
Shall sow with amorous prophecy
Another harvest yet to be.

A MEMORY

BETWIXT the blown sands and the flowing sea
We stood at nightfall. In the hollow west
The ultimate torch of day flared for a space,
Sank and expired. A wind whined round the dunes,
And ragged shreds of vapor, salt and chill,
Went by us in the flaw. We had no tear
To shed, no word to say. Our stricken heads
Were bowed together, and her streaming hair
Swept o'er my cheek. Swiftly the gray night fell
And like a huge hand blotted sea and shore.
I heard her garments rustle in the gloom;
A moment on my breast she laid her brow,
Then turned and from the darkness where she fled,
A sob came down the gust. 'Twas ages since,
But memory still broods on that black hour.

SONG OF THE NORTH WIND

HARK to the voice of me!
Hear thou the singing
Of him who has never
Been paid for his song!
This is the choice of me,
Still to go ringing
The rhymes that forever
Are surly and strong.

Know'st thou the regions cold
Whence I have hasted?
Know'st thou the way I take
Over the earth?
Still stand the legions old—
Ice-kings unwasted—
Fending the frigid lake
Where I had birth.

Frost-banded fountains
Snow-fed from far peaks;
Firths of the polar sea
Rigid as stone;
Shag-bearded mountains;
Deeps that no star seeks;
Strange lights that solar be—
These I have known.

Men fear the breath of me;
Sorrow and anguish,
Famine and fever
Follow my path.
I am the death of thee;
I make thee languish;
Swiftly I sever
Love's ties in my wrath.

Chains can not hold me,
Gyves can not bind me,
Bolts can not lock me,
Floods can not drown!
Fly—and I fold thee;
Hide—and I find thee;
Cry—and I mock thee,
Howling thee down.

CARPE DIEM

THE beasts that roam the fields when Spring is
green

Know not the morrow, mourn not yesterday;
Their joy is now; we pine for what hath been,
Blind to our bliss till it hath slipped away.

THE FATAL TEST

DOWN through the liliated valley, where waters are
foaming and falling

Into the rocky basins, cool and mossy of rim,
Down through the fields and the woodlands, 'mid wild
things hiding and calling,

He comes where green flags wave, and reeds stand
tall and slim.

Hark to the sound of his lyring!—no thin and dis-
cordant noises,

But music that sinks and swells till the ravished
winds grow whist,

While the full-brimmed streams and the birds silence
their jocund voices,

And the whispering trees bend low and hush their
leaves to list.

Brighter Apollo's coming than that of the flame-footed
morning;

Swift from his glorious presence shadows and dark-
ness flee;

O thou by thy doting flock, O Marsyas, hear and take
warning,

Tempt not the god to pause and test his skill with
thee.

What are thy reed-notes frail to strains that are thus
outshaken

From flashing strings that throb and thrill with im-
mortal pain?

Sweet are the sounds of thy fluting, and the echoes
thou dost awaken,

But with the lyre of the god to match thy pipe were
vain.

* * * * *

Flow down, O stream bereaved, amid thy reeds low
plaining;

O bleating flock, ye wander far from the wattled
fold;

Crushed is the shepherd's pipe, and the day is slowly
waning,

But Marsyas will not heed, though the evening dews
be cold.

ART

NO cruel mistress she, with icy brows,
And cold eyes veiled in haughty half-eclipse,
But a warm maid who hears her lover's vows,
With gracious smiles upon her tender lips.

COME BACK, DEAR DAYS

COME back, dear days, come back, O days long fled!
Alas, the shining days of old are dead!

No more white arms through shadowy copses gleam;
No more fair shoulders part the rippling stream;
Through piney groves no pink-lipped, laughing Hours
Dance hand in hand, and garlanded with flowers;
From fruit-heaped shrines no fragrant vapors rise
Into the azure deeps of smiling skies.

When summer airs soft over Enna blow,
No shepherd's plaintive piping, sweet and low,
From distant grassy uplands lightly steals,
And softly dies along the listening fields.
The hymns that through the woodlands rang are
hushed;

Long since was dried the bubbling fount that gushed
Beneath the hill, and purled amid its brede
Of rushes, where Pan notched his idle reed.
No more the Huntress winds her breezy horn
From steep to steep, and in the early morn
No rosy maids lead up the mountain-side
A milk-white steer, sleek-limbed and gentle-eyed,
While dewy vale and rocky heights prolong
With echoes sweet the sacrificial song.
Ay, shaggy Satyr, fleeting Nymph, and Faun,
The youthful joy and freshness—all are gone;

For we have fallen and on evil days and sad,
On clanging marts of trade where men go mad,
On vapid pleasures, and on sorrows vain;
So come again, dear days, come back again;
Re-people our unhaunted groves and streams,
And fill our arid lives with happy dreams.

SUNRISE

THERE are pearls in the heart of the rose,
There are gems on each grassy spire,
And the eye of the hidden violet glows
With a tender and tremulous fire;
For over the valley's emerald brim
The dawn's pale light is spilled,
And the heart of the woodlands, misty-dim,
With the flutter of wings is thrilled.

And hark! welling up from the ground
An elfin music is heard,
And out of the copses floats a sound
Of many a wakening bird.
Now over the wide and darkling sea
Hastens the sun-crowned morn;
There's a flush on the height, there's a light on the lea;
Behold! the day is born.

AN IMMORTELLE

'T WAS here she lay; amid the pillows white
Glimmered her thin sweet face and violet eyes;
Sometimes she watched yon moving square of light,
Or through the window scanned the wistful skies.

Outside the casement tiger-lilies swayed,
And flickering shadows wavered o'er the sill,
As through the vines the frolic breezes played,
Bringing faint scents of mignonette and dill.

Sometimes, flashed o'er her dainty lips, would come
A sudden smile when through its circling bars
Her happy warbler, from its wicker home,
Poured forth its song amid the jasmine stars.

There are the plants she loved: as gracious skies
Shed grateful drops upon the thirsty flowers,
So these knew well her gentle ministries,
For day by day she brought them freshening showe

Their leaves are drooping now; the bird is dumb;
Outside the sill no tiger-lilies wave;
The vines are sere and dead; the snow is come,
And round her tomb the winds of winter rave.

But in our hearts perpetual summer breathes;
Her presence still like perfume fills the room;
For as the buds slip from their velvet sheathes,
She softly burgeoned into deathless bloom.

SONG OF THE VAUDOIS EXILES

O VALLEY as fair as a vision,
O river as bright as a dream,
O fields sweet as meadows Elysian,
O valley, O meadows, O stream,
I leave thee to-day and forever,
Yea, I pass as a tale that is told,
But this flesh from my spirit shall sever
Ere my love for thee fails or grows cold.

O heights that are clothed with the sunlight,
As the hills of our God shine afar,
Henceforth thou shalt stand in but one light
Shed abroad from a shadowless star;
For lo! the clear orb of remembrance
Through sorrow and time shall not wane,
And though tears should obscure thee and distance,
I shall see thee in memory again.

THE BEDOUINS OF THE SKY

YON clouds that roam the deserts of the air,
On wind-swift barbs, o'er many an azure plain,
Scarce pause to lift to Allah one small prayer,
Ere Ishmael's spirit drives them forth again.

ARETHUSA

AH, now I lay my parchéd lips to thine,
That I may quench my blood's consuming fire;
Swiftly I kneel where fainting winds suspire,
And odors o'er the earth are spilt like wine,
That I may touch thy cool soft cheek with mine,
And heal the poignant hurts of my desire.

How have I sought thee, though the weary waste
Reeled round me, and the dizzy light did glare
Athwart my darkling sight, and thorns did tear
My naked feet that stumbled in their haste;
With what importunate thirst I longed to taste
Thy fragrant breath, thy kisses sweet and rare!

O murmur to me! Of thy voice I dreamed
When through my dwindled veins the maddening
drouth
Did surge like fire, and from the pitiless south
A furnace-blast around me ever streamed;
Still did I hear thy voice, and still meseemed
To feel the liquid touches of thy mouth.

Upon thy bosom happy shadows fall,
And tender grasses lightly lean to thee;
Beside thee ever pipes the sylvan bee,
And the hushed flowers hear thy faery call
The conscious reeds weave round thy margin all
Their slender leaves in emerald broidery.

And now I find thee, and I kneel and lay
My brow to thine, and bathe my anguished eyes
In the pure depths where infinite soothing lies
For thy seared lover whom the heat would slay;
To thee I come and hide me from the day
That hurls its blazing barbs from brazen skies.

O tresses flowing over crystal sands
That rise and stir, I plunge my face in thee,
And feel thee ripple down my shoulders free,
And in thee wind and wind my glowing hands;
While from my forehead slip the iron bands
That, ever tightening, wrought new pangs for me.

Here will I lie, nor ever wander more;
For me through endless hours thy billowy breast
Shall lightly heave; to thine shall still be pressed
My eager lips for slaking o'er and o'er;
Here will I lie, upon this easeful shore,
While thou with song dost lull me into rest.

THE DERELICT

A WAN moon sinks behind low-hanging clouds;
The dark waste whispers in unquiet sleep
Where, dim and sinister, with rotting shrouds,
An ooze-stained hulk rolls heavily on the deep.

BEFORE AND AFTER

OLD Janus of the double face
Looks both before and after;
His eyes one moment brim with tears,
The next o'erflow with laughter.

He sees the 'griefs of yesterday,
And turning toward the morrow,
He sees the joys that lie in wait
For hearts bowed down with sorrow.

He sees the homes that love had left,
When evil entered darkling,
Grow bright again with happy smiles
And eyes of children sparkling.

He sees the graves, that once were made
When snow and sleet were falling,
Grow green and fair with grass and flowers,
And birds above above them calling.

He sees the torn and trampled fields,
Where War his red brand raises,
O'erspread at length with leagues of grain
And fringed with star-eyed daisies.

He sees the shattered plans of men,
And lives that shame has blighted,
And ties of love that sundered lie,
All healed and reunited.

He sees old habits' chains thrown off,
Strong fetter snapped from fetter,
And marks, as rolling months go by,
The glad world growing better.

Thus Janus of the double face,
Whose locks with frost are hoary,
Sees streaming from the darkened past
The future's golden glory.

THE GUEST

O PAIN, and art thou come to be my guest?
Then will I not deny thee; lo! I greet
With smiles thy coming; thy wan face is sweet,
And to mine own let thy parched lips be pressed
With fond beguilement; on mine aching breast
Pillow thine head; and while the hours on feet
Of flame run by or haltingly or fleet,
Here shalt thou find thine own companioned rest.
Nay, now I know that who accepteth thee,
How'er his hands may falter, hath thy leave
To loose thy mask and see thee as thou art,—
How that thy forehead shines angelically,
And thy deep eyes mysteriously weave
A spell at length to hush the anguished heart.

PAX MORTIS

THE lady lies clothed all in white;
Her yellow ringlets fall
Like throbbing rays of amber light
Along the sombre pall.

Her shapely limbs, like marble cold,
Gleam through the drapery
That clasps her form in many a fold,
To veil her chastity.

Her lips, pale blighted buds of May,
Shall bloom no more, and lo!
How swiftly shall dissolve away
Her bosom's drifted snow.

The light hath left her sweet blue eyes;
The silver voice is mute,—
Its music fled, and now she lies
Dumb as a shattered lute.

Her hands are crossed upon her breast;
O, is this death or sleep?
And does she only take her rest,
While stars their vigils keep?

The lights burn softly in their place;
A perfume fills the air;
The silence lies upon her face,
And on her yellow hair.

Her two white feet are still and cold;
Her two cold cheeks are white;
But lying under warm soft mold,
She'll feel no chill of night.

The wingéd moments come and go;
The lady doth not reck;
A single rose, as white as snow,
Lies on her sweet white neck.

The silent stars wheel over her;
The watchers watch in vain;
Though dawn shall come she will not stir,
Nor wake nor weep again.

A CITY CRY

HERE hoarsely moan the floods of human woe,
And evermore, along the busy streets,
The iron hoof of traffic loudly beats,
And lean-faced avarice shuffles to and fro;
Here grudgingly the feet of mercy go
Where gaunt and grimy squalor sits and eats
Her bitter bread, and here, through foul retreats,
Death's noisome currents darkly ebb and flow.
O God, of those sweet airs which blow between
The emerald hills, let me e'er breathe; keep me,
Far from the roaring city, in Thy green
And quiet solitudes, where I may see
The birds, the flowers, the grass, and sweetly lean
My heart upon the peace and love of Thee.

THE WANDERER

HAVE you seen our little one?
Yesterday
By our hearth she sweetly shone,
Radiant, star-like; there were none
But did love her; ah, they say
That we've lost her—that she's gone
Far away.

You would know her on the street;
Shining hair,
Eyes of blue, and dainty feet—
You would know her should you meet
Our lost darling anywhere;
God's own saints are not more sweet,
Nor more fair.

We have sought her to and fro,
But in vain;
Ah! if she could only know
How our hearts with tears o'erflow,
She would come to us again;
She would take away our woe,
Heal our pain!

Shall we ever see her more?—
Shining head,

Laughing lips and eyes of yore?
Shall we have her as before,—
Our lost bird that lightly spread
The swift, viewless wings she wore,
And so fled?

Ay, we shall not lose her quite;
By and by,
When our eyes have better sight,
Growing used to larger light,
Her fair path we shall descry.
God will guide our feet aright,
Graciously.

We shall find her some rare day,
Soon or late;
We shall find her at her play,
Blithe as when she fled away;
So we will not wail our fate;
Though our heads and hearts be gray,
We can wait.

A SHOOTING STAR

A HOMESICK angel, with sad eyes
Upon some distant sphere,
Adown the dark abysmal skies
Let fall one golden tear.

FARRINGFORD

(Isle of Wight—October, 1892)

HE sleeps the sleep that knows no earthly waking;
But now for him above eternal hills,
The cloudless dawn of deathless day is breaking,
And splendor fills
The orbit of his vision glorified.
Not yet the glad surprise
Hath faded from his eyes
Of that first raptured gazing on the slopes of Paradise.
New is the song he sings;
His valiant voice outrings
Through all the spaces wide,
Roofed with the lights celestial which o'erdome
That bourne where radiant spirits seek their home.
Him doth the vast deep mourn,
And round this isle that knew his wandering feet
On restless winds is borne
A sigh of lamentation vague and fleet.
The silent ships go by,
To find their haven 'neath an autumn sky,
As conscious that no more
Shall he behold them who of yore
Chanted their conquest over wind and wave.
Ay, he is in his grave,
Where the huge minster's shadowy arches soar,

And where the mighty city's hollow roar
Rolls down the endless streets.
Him the blithe day greets
No longer in the garden that he knew,
Where bright for him the larkspur grew,
And roses shed their sweets—
Where sounds of morn and even did arise
In infinite harmonies.
O, yet we do but err
To deem that beauty's worshiper
Forsakes its shrine
At summons of the Voice divine;
For he hath passed into that inner place
Where now he seeth, face to face,
Eternal Beauty as it is.
Him shall the dews not miss,
Nor the brave grass, nor flowers that bud and blow,
Nor the cool brooks that flow
By wood and fell-side to the wooing sea;
Henceforth he is a part of them, for he
Shall be resolved into that essence pure
Which ever shall endure
As loveliness in stream, and hill, and tree.
His voice men still shall hear
In whispering leaves, and in the noonday choir
Of summer insects, and the dawn-song clear
Where morn plants on the downs her feet of fire.
He still shall sing within the rhythmic tides
That ocean rolls above its caverns hoar,
And in the unheard music that e'er slides

Through gulfs of night from many a star-sprent shore.
His song from countless joyous feathered throats
Shall bubble at day break and at evenfall,
And those far elf-land notes
He loved shall echo in the iterant call
Of black-stoled crickets on the winter hearth.
By many a norland firth
Where the shrewd blasts whine round the icy peaks,
By many a desert strand
Where the Pacific ever idly breaks
A tumbled billow round the lonely land,
Where'er is sound or song, there shall be heard,
Sweet as the memory of love's dying word,
The master's tone in nature's symphony,
Till Time shall furl his wings and cease to be.

A FOOL TO-DAY, A SAINT TO-MORROW

O MOTHER earth, within thine ample breast
Make for thy weary child a quiet bed;
The mob hath raged about his bloody head;
Now fold him to thy heart and let him rest.

At length his spirit sinks, his pulses faint:
Yet while men stoned him he spared not to cry
Against their darling sins; now let him die,
To-day a fool, to-morrow lo! a saint.

SORROW-BLIND

THE world is lovely; but our eyes are dim
With selfish tears, and through the blinding mist
We cannot see the glorious mountains kissed
By the last rays of sunset, nor the slim
And nascent moon above the night's faint rim,
Nor the young stars that keep their early tryst.

The world is lovely; but our pulses beat
To the slow measure of a hopeless pain,
And the dull throbbing of our heart and brain
Shuts out the vision of the fair and sweet;
Yea, even the beauty shining at our feet
Shineth for us, the sorrow-blind, in vain.

The world is lovely; oh, when night comes on,
And long and lonely vigils vex our eyes,
God grant that over all the darkened skies
The stars of promise may be thickly sown;
And though we wait, and watch, and weep alone,
Yet wait as one who knows the dawn shall rise.

A VOLUME OF VERSE

THIS is a plant whose slender growth,
Through years of sun and gloom,
Hath yet scarce burst the bud's green sheath
To show a timid bloom.

THE SPECTER

"Be sure your sin will find you out."—Num. 32:23.

THE night is long, the moon is cold,
The stars faint in the icy sky,
My pulses wane, my heart is old,
And yet I should not dare to die.
Before me ever stands my sin,
A wraith that will not disappear;
Its outstretched hands are pale and thin,
And through them sifts the moonlight clear,

Once from this ghost I sought to hide
Where music clashed and lights did flare,
I turned my eyes, lo! at my side,
Chill, mist-like, silent, it was there.
Then to the wilderness I fled,
In sackcloth wrapped my bitter shame,
Poured ashes on my stricken head—
O God! it o'er me stood the same.

Then an unquiet bed in hell
At length in sheer despair I made,
But while the shadows round me fell,
Beside me rose a blacker shade;
Till suddenly the foul eclipse
Refused to clothe my spirit stark,
And while I shrieked with stiffened lips,
From off me rolled the frightened dark.

And now I drift about the world;
My eyes are emptied of their tears;
My hopes like chaff are round me whirled;
And all my soul is scourged with fears.
The moon sinks low, the night is long;
Beneath a cold and prayerless sky
I stand, watched by my spectral wrong,
Afraid to live, afraid to die.

THE CRUISE

THE great ship's sails are all unfurled,
Her prow divides the ancient sea;
Along her cloudy track the world
Sweeps through immensity.

She bears her freight of tears and graves,
Of trampled dust and bloody wreck,
While seamen chant their jolly staves
Upon her rock-ribbed deck.

Day after day a throng of mimes
Leap smiling from her swarming womb,
To play their little part betimes
Ere falls the lampless gloom.

Her weary voyage is never done;
The winds about her never sleep;
Forever with the flying sun
She cleaves the shoreless deep.

IN THE CLOISTER

HOW wearily the day goes by!
The hateful shadows on the wall
Hour after hour unmoving lie;
Outside, I hear the sparrows call.

The garden walks, white in the glare,
Throb like a pulse beneath the heat;
I see the sun-dial blindly stare;
I count the fountain's steady beat.

Along their beds the flowers droop;
All wilted is the trellised vine;
The branches of the ash-tree stoop
With dusty berries red as wine.

The fly sings in the leaded panes;
And from the echoing chapel steal
The livelong day the distant strains
Of hymn and chant and organ-peal.

I'm tired of the rustling swish
Of trailing robes o'er chilly stones;
I wish—what is it that I wish?
I know a crypt where mouldy bones

Are piled against the vaulted roof;
There a low taper ever smokes;
The jangling bell sounds far aloof,
And muffles its unceasing strokes.

There—there are silence, gloom and rest;
No measured step, no solemn air,
No meek cross o'er a rebel breast,
No downcast eyes, no muttered prayer.

Outside, the blinking waters lie;
Beyond, the great world swings and roars,
Where many an infant's tender cry
Leaps forth from happy human doors.

O flesh, vex not my faltering soul,
Nor let my fancy, wandering wide
From crucifix and saintly stole,
Defile the Bridegroom's virgin bride.

Bride?—ah, I hate this loathsome cell!
I hate yon altar where I kneel,
While still with mumbling lips I tell
The prayers my heart can never feel.

Bride?—still I think on perfumed aisles,
On arching boughs, on grass that springs
By streams that keep their morning smiles,
Where swallows dip their glancing wings;

Where whispers stir the scented dark
Of screening leaves, and where the place
Grows sweet with violet eyes that mark
The truth and beauty in his face.

His face—whose face? My hair is wet
With fevered drops; my hands are weak;
I know the signal that is set
In crimson on my hollow cheek.

And Sister Agnes, with the eyes
Like doves' eyes, comes to softly weep;
Upon my brow her cool hand lies;
I close my lids and feign to sleep.

For I would be alone to dream:
I love my dreams; thus I escape
These maddening walls that ever gleam,
Those sickened blooms, that yellowing grape.

The sluggard moments come and pass;
The flickering light fades from the sill;
I hear the sounds of evening mass,
Of closing doors, and all is still.

And o'er the ash-tree hangs a star
That trembles through the twilight gray;
'Tis night; a watch-dog bays afar;
Dear God, send not another day!

CARLYLE

A WANDERING cloud upon his haggard face
A shadow cast—he thought it doom's black pall;
He saw a transient star shoot from its place,
And deemed the reeling heavens about to fall.

A VANISHED FACE

STILL as of old the morning breaks;
The brook delays its mimic flood,
And in its soft embrace it takes
The ivy-mantled wood.

Within the elm the robin sings;
The lilac blooms beside the bars;
And through the shadows evening brings
Look down the early stars.

And day by day the cheerful sounds
Arise of those who sow or reap,
Who wake to tread life's common rounds,
And turn again to sleep.

The seasons come and go apace,
And naught is changed mine eyes can see;
But in its grave lies one dear face
That was the world to me.

THE CURE-ALLS

Le temps ou la mort sont nos remedes.—Rousseau.

FOR love that blights, for pain that slowly wastes,
For fears that haunt, for hopes that ever flee.
For sorrow that abides, for joy that hastes—
Or time or death hath sovran remedy.

WHEN CLOVER BLOOMS

WHEN clover blooms in the meadows,
And the happy south winds blow;
When under the leafy shadows
The singing waters flow—
Then come to me; as you pass
I shall hear your feet in the grass,
And my heart shall awake and leap
From its cool, dark couch of sleep,
And shall thrill again, as of old,
Ere its long rest under the mold—
When clover blooms.

Deem not that I shall not waken;
I shall know, my Love, it is you;
I shall feel the tall grass shaken,
I shall hear the drops of the dew
That scatter before your feet;
I shall smell the perfume sweet
Of the red rose that you wear,
As of old in your sunny hair;
Deem not that I shall not know
It is your light feet that go
'Mid clover blooms.

O Love, the years have parted—
The long, long years!—our ways;

You have gone with the merry-hearted
These many and many days,
And I with that grim guest
Who loveth the silence best.
But come to me—I shall wait
For your coming, soon or late,
For soon or late, I know,
You shall come to my rest below
The clover blooms.

THE GYPSY QUEEN

I KNOW her where she goes in crimson hood,
And motley robe that sets the leaves astir;
Her truant hair, strayed from its silken snood,
The frost has lightly tipped with minever.

The gypsy blood glows in her sun-browned cheek;
Her rounded arms with liberal fruits are heaped;
Her wine-dark eyes, athwart the shifting reek
Of burning weeds, behold the fields new-reaped.

Too brief the days of her mild empery,
Yet such the ample largess of her grace
That in the wintry heart of memory
Shall still abide the sunshine of her face.

NAMELESS GRAVES

O GRATEFUL heart of the nation, keep
Their memory green forever—
Our laureled dead who softly sleep
By many a winding river,
Where whispering pines and sunny palms,
Above each grass-grown grave,
Recount through bright and prosperous calms
The great deeds of the brave.

Shall we for whom they freely shed
Their blood, like rain on flowers,
Shall we for whom they nobly bled
Forget these knights of ours?—
Who fought and fell where shot and shell
Ploughed through the lists of death,
And as it were the mouth of hell
Upsent its withering breath!

How by the treacherous morass,
Through deadly mists and damps;
How by each wild and savage pass,
O'er glooming fens and swamps;
How ever towards the shifting foe
They pressed with brave endeavor—
While free winds blow and waters flow,
The world shall know forever.

O how they fell! No tongues shall tell
Death's red and plenteous reaping;
On sandy slope, in woody dell,
The countless dead are sleeping,
'Mid silent camps where ne'er again
The trumpet's sudden braying
Shall wake them to war's leaden rain
And battle's iron slaying.

O'er each lone tomb shall summer bloom,
And grasses sway and bend,
And lightly through the fragrant gloom
The evening dews descend:
'Tis well! for there they crept to hide
Their bodies pierced and maimed,
And there, unseen, they bled and died,
Alone, but not ashamed.

And there, by night, look down the stars
On many a nameless grave,
Where shadows cast their silver bars,
And misty streamers wave:
Back to her heart doth nature fold
Her own, to keep and bless,
While o'er them tides of sleep are rolled
And sweet forgetfulness.

A BALLAD OF DEATH

I HUG thy face to mine,
I feel thy breath;
What breath so shrewd as thine,
So sweet, O Death?

Give me thy lips to kiss;
Like rare old wine
They thrill and sting with bliss—
Those lips of thine.

Against thy heart I press,
O Death, my lover;
My utter nakedness
Thy cloak shall cover—

Thy cool, thick cloak of grass
And woven flowers,
Through which no heat can pass,
Nor frost nor showers.

No warineth is in thy breast,
Nor is it colder
Than lends a pleasant rest
To them that molder.

My heart from thy true heart
Time shall not sunder;
We shall not lie apart,
The dark sod under;

But lie in cloven clay,
And clasp and kiss,
Nor miss the light of day,
Nor starlight miss.

My mouth shall cleave to thine,
My arms shall hold thee;
Thy soul shall mix with mine,
Thy peace enfold me.

I grasp thy bony wrist,
Nor fear nor falter;
Thy love shall still exist
(Nor ever alter)

When earthly love hath fled
And left no traces;
Thy tears are never shed
On faded faces.

Than love of earthly friends,
What love is blinder?
Earth's love with hatred blends;
Thy love is kinder.

Thy love shall still exist,
Despite derision;
No dim deceitful mist
E'er clouds thy vision,

But thou dost see aright;
Thy love hath power
To purge thine inward sight,
From hour to hour.

Lean over; let me touch
Thy wan white face;
Thou hast such beauty, such
High, godlike grace.

Mine eyes thy kisses seal,
And on me pressing,
Thy thin moist palms I feel,
In mute caressing.

O Death, I love thee, thou
So gracious art;
I lay my throbbing brow
On thy cool heart,

And sink beneath a flood
Of blissful feeling,
While into all my blood
Thy calm is stealing.

Who grieves to leave an earth
Of tears and sighs,
Of moans and hollow mirth,
Of spite and lies?

Not I. Make room for me;
My face is numb;
Henceforth with kissing thee
My lips are dumb.

JOY OF LIFE

O HEART, lift up a brave song,
For it is good to be;
We will not sing a grave-song,—
Avaunt, mortality!

Far from us be the wormy mold
Where Sorrow's footsteps fall;
Far from us be the phantoms cold
That through the darkness call.

Now let us lift a morning lay;
The sun is in the sky;
The winds of God about us play;
An angel rustles by.

And there is dew upon the sward,
And flowers are in the grass,
And lo! the glory of the Lord
Gleams where his garments pass.

A PUZZLE

A LAS! I am a gray-beard;
My years are fifty-three;
I'm old and grave, but Bessie ne'er
Will sit upon my knee.

Yet once this dimpled maiden,
With bird-like sounds of glee
And sweet proprietary airs,
Would perch upon my knee.

And oft we've romped together,
When summer winds blew free,
But evening stars and sleepy eyes
Brought Bessie to my knee.

But now I cannot coax her;
What can the difference be?
Her gowns are long, she romps no more,
Nor sits upon my knee.

THE SINGING PILGRIM

CONTENT, with meager scrip and pilgrim staff,
Singing he journeys through the changeful years;
At whiles, he stays to laugh with those who laugh;
Anon, his way lies through the Vale of Tears.

AT THE WINDOW

A LITTLE face at the window,
A tiny hand that waves good-bye,
A dimpling smile, and golden hair
Wherein the frolic sunbeams lie;
Such is the vision that all day long
Follows my weary feet,
And moves wherever my tired eyes
Gaze on the busy street.

For how could one toil and wrestle,
To win his daily wage of bread,
Did he not think on those loving eyes,
Those rosebud lips, that shining head?
So while the heavy hours go by
In the noisy market-place,
I long for the moment to see again
At the window that little face.

O little face at the window!
O sunny eyes and silken hair!
I hasten my footsteps homeward,
For I shall find you there.
Far, far hence be the evening hour
When I no more shall see
At the darkened window a little face,
Except in memory.

HYGEIA

O DARKENED eyes above the grass,
O have you seen the maiden pass?
Her smile is like the morn, they say;
Her forehead fairer than the day.

With some who know it not she walks;
By cottage gates she stands and talks;
She flees the palace and the hall,
Nor heeds the golden tongues that call.

She lives with dawn upon the hills;
She loiters by the sliding rills;
Where berries grow, her lips she stains;
Her cheeks are tanned by winds and rains.

From those who seek her, fast she flies,
But not to alien suns or skies;
Oft when afar her lovers roam,
She bides beneath the vines at home.

Few prize the maid, when face to face
They see her lusty, full-blown grace;
O fools and blind, alas! alas!
Say, have you seen the maiden pass?

THE CHAMBER OF NIGHT

DOES the time seem very long,
While you lie beneath the grass,
Listening to the blackbird's song
And the wings that come and pass?

Some a moment pause and wait—
Shy wild things that love the trees—
Gurgling to each feathered mate
Little love-fraught symphonies.

Are you weary lying there
While the clouds float overhead,
And, through cool and fragrant air,
Sift their dews upon your bed?

Do you never long to rise
And, amid the ways of men,
Catch the light of tender eyes,
Hear some kindly speech again?

Do you dream of seasons gone
When the thorn was white with bloom,
And behind the peaks of dawn
Sank the winter's chill and gloom?

Then love found you, and your heart,
Brimmed with music like a bird's,
Mid its vine-leaves sang apart,
Raptured with its own sweet words.

But the shadow doom-like fell,
And the light died in eclipse,
And the silence laid its spell
On your heart and on your lips.

And the summers come and go,
And the sun wheels round and round,
And the winter's punctual snow
Softly wraps your peaceful mound.

Are you thus content to lie,
All so quiet in your place,
Turning ever toward the sky
Your unmoved and pallid face?

Tell me, does there sometimes creep
Through your veins the old desire,
Sundering all the bonds of sleep,
Mounting like a sudden fire?

And as spring moves up the slope,
In the fond voice of the dove
Hear you, too, the voice of Hope,
"Waken, waken, waken, love?"

THYSELF

FIND thine own voice and utter thine own heart;
Be thine own prophet of the misty years;
Be more of nature thine and less of art;
Keep sweet the fount of laughter and of tears.

THE AVANT-COURIER

HO, death's outrider! dost thou wait
Before my castle's ancient gate,
And bid me, with imperious knock,
Straightway the stubborn valves unlock?
I know thy voice, thy grim disguise,
The fever burning in thine eyes,
Thine eager haste that none can stay.
Thy summons brooking no delay.
And wherefore are thou come so soon?
The hour scarce marks mid-afternoon
Upon the dial, and the sun
Gives yet no hint that day is done;
Not yet along my ways are shed
Life's clustered roses, white and red—
Still round the beaker's honeyed brim
Joy's rainbow bubbles lightly swim.
And whence, O Courier, hast thou fared,
To bid a chamber be prepared
For that weird guest, whose coming long
I hoped to ward with wine and song?
Go by, go by a little space;
I prithee, grant me of thy grace
A little longer season yet
My house in order fair to set,
And fitly welcome, as seems best,
So rare and so august a guest.

Thou wilt not pass? I must descend
To open unto thee, my friend?
Be not impatient—hold thy hand,
I come to do thy stern command.
Lo! thus the portals wide I fling;
I know the message thou dost bring,
What urgent need hath spurred thy flight—
My soul shall be required this night.

ROMEO TO JULIET

LOVE, touch my mouth with kisses as with fire;
Lean hard against my breast, that I may feel
From thy warm heart its influence subtly steal
Through all my veins; with overmuch desire
My spirit fainteth, and my lips suspire
Swiftly with heavy breathings; round me reel
The shadows of the dark, and downward wheel
The dim, far stars from heaven; draw me nigher
Unto thy bosom, Love, for all my sense
Of earth and time fleets from me . . . Dayward flows
The stream of night, and into yon immense
Blue void the slow moon fails; hold me more close,
Lest from thine arms my spirit hasten hence,
Going that viewless way no mortal knows.

EUTHANASIA

HEARKEN, yea hearken, O Death!
Sweet Death, thou shadowy nurse,
With touches soft and cool;
Thou art the lover and healer,
The watcher thou and the soother
Of all who suffer and weep.
The bosom of thee is a refuge,
A hiding-place and a fortress
From tempest, from woe and misfortune.
The face of thee is not evil
To him who beholds thee and knows thee
Gentle and pitiful ever.
O gracious and grateful thy presence!
Thine eyes are filled with compassion,
And thy countenance, tender and mild,
Bringeth peace to disquieted spirits.
Forth through the aisles of the woodlands,
Through orchards where blossoms have sifted
Their petals o'er green springing grasses,
'Mid fields where the singing of birds
And the breathing wind and the sunshine
Are fraught with the promise of spring,
Thou passest and touchest the bud,
The blossom, the breast of the singer,
And straightway they leave us, enchanted,
Loving thee more than the world.

The fragrance, the light, and the longing,
The glory, the grace, and the gladness,
The marvel, the mystery of all
That we love or hold dear on the earth,
Are forsaken, outrivaled, forgotten,
When thou dost beckon away.
Laughter and singing,
Sobbing and crying,
Seeking and losing,
Sleeping and waking,
Forever and ever
In Death's house surcease.
Restful thy silence
After the tumult,
Strife and confusion
Born of the earth.
Lay thy palm, cool and moist, on our foreheads,
Till the fever, the aching and throbbing,
And the phantoms brought forth of disease
Shall vanish forever away.
We praise thee, O Death, our physician!
We love thee, O Death, for thy balm!
We trust thee, companion and friend,
For thou wilt not, thou canst not betray,
Since thou art God's servant to men.

NOVA VITA

"That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die."

1 Cor. xv. 36

O DAINTY babe, thou wast too fair to die!
What couldst thou have to do with writhing
worms,
With dank, dull clods, and the grave's mystery?
What dim affinity with these blind germs,
Which nature, when the time is ripe, shall change
To waving corn, didst thou possess? O strange
And dark to mortal vision are the ways
Of Infinite Wisdom. Need'st thou, too, descend
Into the earth's cold bosom with the maize,
That fostering nature unto thee may lend
Her subtlest powers of light and warmth and dew,
To make thee blossom into life anew?
What sweeter charms, what graces rich and rare,
Unknown to human love, shalt thou assume?
O, than thou wast can there be aught more fair?
Thy face was like a flower in its bloom,
Delicate, pure and joyous, and thine eyes
Deeper and bluer than yon deep blue skies.
Lo! I must fare along the weary years,
Lonely and hopeless, seeing through my tears
Only a low green mound of summer grass,
Where once I hid thee in the peaceful keep
Of Night and Silence, who shall rock thy deep
Cool cradle, till I too one day shall pass
Death's border unawares, and fall on sleep?

UNCHANGEABLE

BEHOLD the light upon the purple hill;
Behold the undimmed glory of the sky;
Look! as of old there singing goes the rill—
Love, all things do not die.

There gleams as bright an emerald in the grass
As in those years when you and I were young;
The restless birds that ever come and pass,
Sing with as sweet a tongue.

The flowers that spring on yonder sunny slope
Are just as fair as flowers used to be;
The world hath changed not! we have lost our hope,
And we have changed, Love, we.

Have lost our hope? nay, Love, our hope is found;
Secure from change, secure from tempests wild,
Forevermore our own, beneath the ground,
O Love, we keep our child.

A RUINED ROSEBUD

WHERE the lamps flare beneath the rainy skies,
On the drenched stones a sodden rosebud lies;
And nigh it, huddled in a loathsome heap,
Maunders a wretched girl in drunken sleep.

THE MILK-MAID

HER ankles brush the dew-wet grass;
The birds are blithe to see her pass;
Along the daisies, golden-bright,
Run little shivers of delight.
Her shining pail swings on her arm;
Within her hair the sun lies warm;
No cloud is in the morning skies;
No shadow veils her April eyes;
Songs gurgle from her heart and lips,
As o'er the field she lightly trips,
To where beside the smooth-worn gate
Her swollen-uddered cattle wait.
Yet ere her task she shall essay,
She will not start and turn away
If suddenly her cheek be pressed
To happy Colin's lusty breast,
The while upon her tender mouth
He slakes love's oft-recurring drouth.
Ah, who would not gray wisdom miss,
To feel again the velvet kiss
That thrilled the lyric heart of yore?
Who—who would not be young once more?

A PROTEST

WHAT!—old! Not so! Who says we're old?
Our life still keeps its morning gold;
The dew still shines upon the grass
Where'er our eager footsteps pass.
Young Hope before us waves his wings,
Lifts up his voice and bravely sings,
While ambushed Joys, with twinkling eyes,
Betray us into sweet surprise.
No, we're not old; the lying years
Have whispered falsehoods in our ears;
We still are young, and still we keep
Our youth's fine wisdom, calm and deep—
That wisdom which still holds in fee
Faith in our own humanity,
And faith in God who veils His face,
But whose large language still we trace
In blooms below and stars above,
Whose burden was and still is—love.
Old? Fie! Go to! Let Gaffer Time
On other's temples sow his rime,
But howe'er wags his churlish tongue,
Our own hearts tell us we are young.

THE ADVENT

HER footsteps gleam upon the eastern slope,
And beds of primrose blush beneath her tread;
Her virgin eyes are luminous with hope,
Her dewy locks down ripple from her head;
Her feet are bare, her garments smell of myrrh,
And all the little flowers lean to her.

To greet her coming, lo! the woods awake
With jubilation, and the pasture-lands,
Where rove the herds, are strewn with many a flake
Of lambent fire, as by invisible hands;
Deep unto deep sends forth its jocund call,
The earth is glad, and God is over all.

ARACHNE

AH, poor Arachne, what availed thy skill?
A mortal ne'er can match immortal art;
Better it were that thou hadst brimmed thy heart
With housewife thrift and peace, than thus to fill
Thy life with anguish and the years with ill.
What strange new pangs did through thy being dart,
As loathly change crept o'er thee, part by part,
When the proud goddess wrought on thee her will?
Dost thou remember sadly those old days
When all the maidens envied thy deft hands,

And bitter in their ears was thy just praise?
Now is thy sorrow told in many lands,
And every gossamer by dewy ways
Shines with thy tears that bead its silken strands.

A CITY THOROUGHFARE

THE flags are hot beneath my feet,
And up and down the roaring street,
Twixt blazing fronts of brick and stone,
No gracious breath of air is blown.
I hear a wheezy violin
Above the vast unceasing din,
Where at the corner, with bare head,
A beggar sits blind as the dead.
There creeps misshapen, pale and lean,
A cripple, in whose hands is seen
A banner whoso runs may read,
That "Levy never fails to lead
In clothing and in shoes." Now loud
Above the turmoil of the crowd,
Straight through the city's throbbing heart,
'Mid knots of vans that swiftly part,
Its harsh gong pealing warningly,
An ambulance goes dashing by.
A newsboy shrieks and flaunts his wares;
A truckman on the car-track swears
And turns aside his ponderous dray,
As the bell clangs to clear the way.
There Beauty sweeps by Squalor's side;
There Vice and Fashion proudly ride;

There still within his gilded gates
Sits Dives, while gaunt Lazarus waits
Outside, with dull and weary eye,
For some kind soul to come and buy
His shoestrings or his pins.

And yet,

I know a bank where ferns are wet
With morning balm, where mosses grow,
And 'mid lush sedges softly flow
The netted currents of a stream
Snared in its own melodious dream.
There glance brave wings; there many a sound
Of silver bugles lightly wound
Steals sweetly through the haunted shade
Of grassy isle and bosky glade.
And there lives faith in all things good;
There whispers stir the solitude
Like prayers; and there again grow bright
The spirits that were clogged with night.
There Care her haggard mask lays by
To let young Hope smile in her eye,
While every breeze from perfumed fields
To Grief a sure nepenthe yields.
There let me haste, there let me bide,
Drenched with the opulent summer-tide.

PEREUNT ET IMPUTANTUR

FROM sun to sun, on silence-sandled feet
The Hours go by, and on each nunlike face
Who will may catch a smile than dawn more sweet,
Or, leaden-eyed, may miss its fleeting grace.

Within her hands each bears a goodly gift,
And while she neither proffers nor withholds,
She tarries not to urge upon unthrift
The precious things she yields to earnest souls.

Not one returns; no backward look is cast;
Once gone, nor call nor prayer can reach them more,
Clasped round with shadows of the vanished past,
Housed in the dim, cloud-mantled gates of yore.

HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT

NO, not the cross on which He hung,
Nor blood that wet each bitter thorn,
Nor cruel scourgings of hate's tongue,
Nor yet the writhing thief's hot scorn—
Not these His cup of woe could crown;
But that which crushed His heart with pain
Was, that He came unto His own,
And to them came, alas! in vain.

A GREAT MAN

SERENE he trod the awful verge of night,
And on the black and weltering chaos there
He looked with unaffrighted eyes, if so
Some star of hope with softly pulsing heart
He might discern. Against his brow he felt
The thin cold air from myriad beating wings
That rose from out the void and past him swept—
The obscene things of darkness from the pit
Rushing with raucous cries. A tranquil ear
He bent to catch the secret whisperings
Of unseen visitants whose rustling vans
Betimes he heard beside him where he passed.
He coned his own soul and its various needs,
And felt the germs of immortality
Stir in his nature. When he could not see,
He still believed, and deemed that he was blest,
Though men turned from him with averted face,
And asp-like tongues spat venom on his name.
The tearless pathos of humanity
Touched to the quick his brooding sympathies,
And the poor, brute-like, blindly struggling world
Smote sometimes its bruised hands against his breast,
Waking a stormy music from the tense
And quivering chords strung like a wind-harp there.
He meekly lived unconscious of himself,
And being thus unconscious, he was great.

THE CRISIS

ALL night we watched the staring dial
Within the chamber hushed and dim;
Faith trembled towards its hour of trial,
Hope cowered amid the shadows grim.

Outside, the night was drenched with rain;
Rude, viewless fingers tore the vines;
The winds whined at the window-pane,
And grieved amid the rocking pines.

We held our hearts, and waited still,
While came and went her fluttering breath,
And on her drawn pale brow a chill
Seemed to foretoken imminent death.

And then we prayed; our streaming eyes
Ran down in tears; when lo! a rest
Like balm bedewed us from the skies,
And peace unmeasured filled each breast.

Then from its glossy throat a bird
Outsent a clear sweet note; the mild
Fresh morning woke; and joy! we heard
Her dear voice call us, and she smiled.

THE PRISONER AND THE LARK

What joyous things, he said, are those larks in the spring sun! Do you know that pathetic story of the lark and of the man freed from the Bastille during the French Revolution? As he came from prison, some one took pity on him and gave him a few sous. Passing down the street, he saw a lark in a cage; and the man, who had been in prison many years, could not bear the sight of the imprisoned bird. With his few poor sous he bought and set it free. The lark shot up to heaven singing a jubilant song of triumph—but the next moment dropped dead at the man's feet, dead with excess of joy.—Memoir of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

OUT of the prison, stooped and old,
Out of the dungeon dank, he came;
The light on the pavement burned like gold;
The blue of the skies was shot with flame.

His eyes, so long in darkness bound,
Wavered and blenched before the sun;
The city streets, with sound on sound,
His shrinking spirit seemed to stun.

Helpless and dazed, along the way
His footsteps wandered here and there;
The thin white locks on his shoulders lay;
He drank as athirst the free sweet air.

Then some kind soul with pitying eyes
Looked on those features worn and gaunt,
The shadowy haggard mask of want.
And saw beneath their wan surprise

So into his tremulous pallid hand,
The dole of a few poor sous was thrust;
There were famishing hosts in that mouldered land;
The gift would purchase at least a crust.

Down the long street, with feeble tread,
Broken, bewildered, the old man went,
As one alive who has long been dead,
Or one in a desert whose strength is spent.

But hark! upon his startled ears
What clear, sad notes are those that fall?
What strain is that which again he hears?
From his far-off youth what voices call?

He sees once more the lucid streams
That from the upland pastures flow;
Beside the folded flock he dreams;
At dawn he hears the red cock crow.

He sees the cattle in the byre
Where the gray dews of morning lie;
With swelling throat and heart of fire
The lark is fluting in the sky.

But no! as with a roar of rage
The city strikes his vision dead;
There in its narrow wicker cage
A captive lark pipes o'er his head.

With sudden tears his heart o'erflows;
Scarce one hour since he, too, was where
The ruthless walls around him rose,
And on him blew death's chilling air.

Ah, piteous! yonder hapless bird
Its drooping wings shall beat in vain
Against its bars; be his the word
To give it the free skies again.

So from his tattered coat he drew
The scanty coins; now his the right
To swing the cage-door wide; upflew
The lark with gurglings of delight.

A moment there he hears that bliss
O'er all the tumult of the street,
A soaring song:—but what is this
That falls and flutters at his feet?

Poor little shattered thing, how brief
The flight to freedom it did take!
O fainting one, bear thou thy grief!
With rapture, too, the heart can break.

FROM AN ANCIENT URN

STRANGER, pause; Felicitas,
Or all of mortal that she was,
Lies within this little urn;
Of her virtues wouldst thou learn,
Of her truth-enkindled eye,
Of her snow-white chastity,
Of her nature wise and pure,
Of her trust that did endure
Past the falsehood, scorn and shame
Heaped upon her spotless name?—
Then within his lonely house
Seek her weeping, widowed spouse:
He will tell thee, through his tears,
How amid these human years,
Once a spirit from above
Bore for him the flower of love,
Till, from her brief exile here,
She swiftly sought her native sphere.

ROBERT BROWNING

(May 7, 1812)

THITHER he came; before his ardent feet
The ways divided; in his eager face
Glowed warm the light of pure resolve, and fleet,
Soft zephyrs brought unto the charmed place
Fine, mystic incense from some far-off clime,
While o'er him breathed the morning in its prime.

Three calm-eyed lustrous virgins nigh him stood,
With rose-leaf lips curved in a tender smile;
He on them looked and knew that they were good.

Then one, whose voice like music did beguile
With dearest accents, wooed him from the spot;
He bowed and hearkened, but he answered not.

The second spake: before his quickened eyes
Fair scenes uprose; clear streams their lengths un-
rolled

Through wide and luminous valleys picture-wise;
The blue o'erhead was flecked with white and gold;
Him then with brush and palette did she prove,
But still his waiting spirit did not move.

The third that called him bore a golden lyre
Against her bosom, and unfading bays
Girt her smooth brow; then sudden sweet desire
Upleaped within him, and immortal lays
From out his inmost heart unbidden came,
While all his life burned toward her like a flame.

And lo, he worshiped at her shining feet,
Then rose to follow her o'er many a waste;
He hungered, and she gave him tears for meat;
She slaked his thirst with waters harsh to taste;
Thus having found him steadfast to the core,
She turned on him a radiant face once more.

Ye ministers of fire, ye flaming seers,
High prophets of the soul, with you consort
One who hath place among his own great peers,
One who hath seen the elements disport
In vast abysses where the thunders sleep,
And noisome dragons their fell vigils keep.

And his the glory and the equal dower
Of star-crowned love and beauty passionless;
The eloquence of the golden-hearted flower,
The faith that wrestles in the wilderness;
Still fares he forth from dawn-lit paths dew-pearled,
A singing pilgrim through a singing world.

A PAVEMENT FOSSIL

AEONS ago, in its primeval slime,
It throve throughout that dim chaotic morn,
When the long twilight of unfolding time
Still brooded o'er a world but lately born.

On the palimpsest of the sodden clay,
The obscene creatures that did fly or creep
Left the rude record of their uncouth play
And conflicts with the dragons of the deep.

An unimagined day of raucous cries,
Through air obscured by countless bat-like wings,
Of monsters, roaring at the shuddering skies,
In deadly fight with mailed and scaly things.

Then the earth groaned in travail; mighty throes
Rent her huge ribs asunder, as the floods
In weltering gulfs o'er sinking mountains rose.
While new peaks burst from the waste solitudes.

But the unstable waves roll back again,
And from the laboring bosom of the world,
As from a prostrate Titan mad with pain,
The reeking continents are once more uphurled.

So the vast drama surges on, and still
O'er all the life dissolved in dust and night
Life mounts and triumphs evermore, until
Man lifts his thought-wreathed brow towards the light.

And here where the great city, street by street,
Pours its full tides with ceaseless ebb and flow,
Unheeded and unheeding, myriad feet
Spurn this dull relic of the long ago.

None reads the lesson; after noise and strife,
Darkness and silence; o'er man's fallen head,
Far ages hence, perhaps some higher life
In crowded marts may pass with busy tread.

If then about the world blow kindlier airs,
If fairer eves and sweeter mornings shine,
And hearts no longer break beneath their cares,
For all the old life gone who shall repine?

IN THE MARKET PLACE

O MUSE, we have piped, but none have danced,
And now we sit in the market-place,
(While the shadows of noon on the flags lie tranced),
With idle fingers and drooping face.

Why should we vex our souls to send
Our laboring breath through the hollow reed?
No ears are charmed, save those that bend
To scrannel straws at the lips of greed.

Come, let us rise from these sordid ways;
Let us flee to the conscious woods and streams,
And though we have fallen on evil days,
We will dwell apart and keep our dreams.

AFTER THE BRIDAL

SO, she was reared for this,
To leave the house silent at last!
No singing more,
No laughter nor young bliss;
Out from my door,
Out from the dove-white past,
She goes ne'er to return a maid;
All unafraid
She passes into the great world with him.
Does he so love her then
That, dwarfing love of other men,
His love out-towers the thought and care,
The eyes with vigils dim,
The daily toiling and the secret prayer,
That forge a parent's life?
To be a wife!
O little daughter with the shining hair,
O youthful maiden with the dainty feet,
O tender woman in whose glances meet
The spring and summer sweet,
That thou mightst find thy mate
Is this thy filial gift?—this desolate
And sunless room
Where, clothed with gloom,
A bowed and broken man,
His days a span,
Sits through long vacant watches still to stare
Across a widowed hearthstone chill and bare.

WITHDRAWN

WHERE nun-faced violets, dashed with silver dew,
Hide in the moss-lipped hollows of the bank,
And slender osier wands, reared rank on rank,
Sway o'er the waters kissed to heaven's own blue;
Where breathing winds balsamic odors strew
Far sweeter than Persephone e'er drank
In that pale garden where dream-zephyrs prank
The dim gray slopes with rosemary and rue—

There dwells she whose white soul is like the eve
When the clear sun has vanished from the skies,
And the large stars, amid the twilight, weave
Through trance-hushed leaves their wizard trceries;
There steal no rumors of the world to grieve
The lucid innocence of her calm eyes.

THE PURSUIT OF FAME

I FOLLOW, follow, but I win it not;
I see its golden radiance from afar
Through leagues of darkness fallen like a blot
On the wide landscape; still I seek the star.

I seek the star, yet know not surely where
The pathway lies by tangled wood and fen;
The night is chill, and through the ghostly air
Thin voices call again and yet again.

I see it wavering through the hollow dark;
Anon it brightens, sinks, and seems to die;
Then slowly kindles like a little spark,
Until it throbs and burns against the sky.

And when 'tis mine at length, and wearied quite
I pause forspent where winds blow cool and damp,
I find, mid mocking whispers of the night,
Naught but a firefly bearing his small lamp.

THE NEWCOMER

I HEAR a little footstep
Fall lightly on the floor,
And slowly on its hinges turns,
The half-reluctant door.

A child stands on the threshold,
Dimpled and shy and fair,
With baby finger at his lips,
And soft wind-ruffled hair.

He pauses for a word or nod,
Betwixt a smile and tear;
Ah, let me bid him welcome—
It is the infant year.

MILTON

A WINGED and radiant spirit, yet a man!
A man of mortal passions, mortal wants—
A man of simple pleasures, hopes, and griefs,
And who at last like us must needs fare out
Upon that dim and undiscovered way
Whither earth's generations wend from sight.
To him man's life was as an open page
Whereon he read the riddle of the years,
And nature was a vast apocalypse.
Earth was to him a treasure house wherein
His riches lay, and from its darksome crypts
At his quick summons came its secrets forth,
Trooping, obedient, the vassals of his will.
He knew the seas, and all their myriad life
To him became a mystic revelation,
Beautiful, mutable, ceaseless, and he heard
In the small ripples tinkling on the beach
Voices and words and syllables of love.
Listening, he caught the accents of the storm,
Hearing therein no sounds of violence,
But the large, lofty converse of a friend.
Considering the lilies of the field,
The grass, the wayside hedge, he heard their speech,
And every trembling leaflet spake to him

In a divine, mysterious utterance
He understood alone. He made him friends
Of brooks and birds and rocks and hills and woods,
Interpreting their language with his heart,
And heaven's high arcana were his joys.
The sun and moon and stars sphered all their light
About his pathway, fending evil shapes
And shadowy horrors, and dark, skulking wrongs,
Born of a leprous, foul, volcanic age,
From him their child, their prophet, priest and king.
His mind was not like theirs who cannot hold
Resolve for one brief moment, but through years
He followed to its splendid consummation
A steadfast plan; nor did he coyly touch
A theme that saintliest souls this world e'er knew
Scarce dare to dream of, but he freely dwelt
In heavens of beauty and in hells of terror,
Where lesser minds, benumbed and silence-smit,
And whelmed in seas of gloom ineffable,
Down to swift, nether gulfs of night had sunk.
Ere darkness on the windows of his soul
Fell and forever quenched the light without,
He doted on fair Nature's loving face
That smiled and lightened on him where he moved.
He turned his forehead to the vaulted sky,
And saw the miracle of the night and day,
And read the signs of love and peace in all.
But when to him these were forever veiled,
Within the effulgence of his own great soul
He sat, and with invisible things communed,

Dwelling with those vast beings of his brain,
And holding discourse with the hoary past.
The hidden archives of his life contained
Records whereof the occult charactery
Angels alone might read. A wider realm
Was that wherein he moved than others claimed.
He bade his spirit flee from zone to zone,
And range inviolate lands of snow and ice,
Where sleeps the frozen silence of the poles.
All things conveyed a meaning unto him;
Nothing was useless, nothing base or mean,
Which had sprung forth from the Creative Hand.

MAIDEN AND BRIDE

SHE moves amid a surf of wind-blown flowers;
I see her where her garments flow and shine;
Her tresses, Danaë-like, in golden showers
Ripple from off her lyric brow and twine
About her supple throat, while in her eyes
The haunting spirit of youth unshadowed lies.

A shy sweet smile about her parted lips
Hovers in rosy dimples; on her breast,
As jealous of the buds there in eclipse
Of foam-white blooms, one tender hand is pressed;
She loves and dreams round all the meadows wide,
Till May the maiden shall be June the bride.

R. L. S.

PRITHEE turn, O passer-by,
In this green inclosure lie
All the graces that could lend
Fragrance to the name of "friend";
Knightly instincts, kindly deeds,
Swift response to life's deep needs,
Courtesies that did not fail,
Sympathies that ne'er grew stale.
Home of finest thoughtfulness,
And those impulses that bless
Bowed and stricken humankind,
While to make malice nobly blind,
Was the man that moulders here;
So to nature he is dear,
And the heavens that o'er him bend
Daily breathe, "He was a friend."

DEFEATED

I FOLLOW not by paths I knew of yore
The way to heart-peace and unvexed content;
The strenuous wrestlings of my soul are o'er;
The strength that bore me onward, now is spent.

Here will I stay me in this quiet place,
Far from the strivings of the clamorous world;
The lucid dews shall lave my parchéd face,
The night's cool shades shall o'er me be unfurled.

I will not question more of well or ill,
Or why I failed within the bannered lists;
Welcome this hour, the evening's gloom and chill,
The silent woodlands and the silver mists.

The whip-poor-will wails from his dusk retreat;
The firefly's mimic lightning in the grass
Flames where one pallid blossom at my feet
Breathes its sweet incense on the winds that pass.

Gone are the day's rude noises and alarms;
Shorn and defeated, lo! I seek but rest;
O soothing night, fold round me thy wide arms,
Pillow my head upon thy generous breast.

LITTLE FOOTFALLS

NO, never the rhythm of showers in summer more
lightly beat
On leaves all quivering with joy at the cooling kiss
of the rain,
Than on my thirsty ears fell the patter of tiny feet
And the sound of a silvery voice a-gurgle with laughter again.

For who can measure the silence bodeful as that of death
When in the hushed, dim chamber, where white,
drawn faces peer,
Above the broken whispers flutters a gasping breath,
And the pale lids curtain the eyes than all besides
more dear?

None, none can fathom the stillness that steals from
room to room

Whence one small presence has passed, like a sudden
light gone out,

And none can know the horror of irrevocable gloom,
Save those the life of whose darling hangs in the
scales of doubt.

Ah, how the shadows are lifted, and the joy-bells throb
again,

And the heart sings in the bosom like a dawn-
awakened bird,

When little feet turn backward from the Valley of Loss
and Pain,

And the music of fairy footfalls once more in the
house is heard.

ANTICIPATION

NO rose can shut and be a bud again;
Sometime, my darling, you will understand
Why I am greedy of these moments when
Against my breast I hold your little hand,
And watch the curves and dimples of your face,
And all your beauty and your flower-like grace.

For the swift current of the ceaseless years
Shall bear you on their bosom to life's main,
Where tempests rage and hearts grow sick with fears,
And the black shadow waits whose name is Pain;
Then this sweet brow shall wear a crown of care,
And I, my dear one, I shall not be there.

O tender feet, the way is rough and steep;
O violet eyes, your vigils must be long;
So while I may, in love's nest let me keep
My precious baby safe from any wrong;
Kiss me with lips still pure and undefiled,
For sometime I shall lose you, O my child.

THE UPPER REALMS

SERENE, apart, unvexed of clamant years,
As the lean-headed eagles build on high
Mid towering crags, and see the clouds go by
Far down with lightnings torn and know no fears,
So where old Time his austere front uprears
Against the cold and solitary sky,
I've seen the morn's imperious banners fly,
And stars expiring weep celestial tears.
Lonely but glad, calm but not cheerless grown,
I've heard the solemn converse of the night,
Have caught the low and inarticulate moan
Of pines upon the immemorial height;
Yet my rapt soul has dwelt not all alone,
For lucid wings have o'er me stayed their flight.

VOX DOLORIS

(Jerusalem, B. C., 458)

NAY, but I loved thee so—and love thee still:
Look, didst thou not, when thou a stranger wast
In my far Babylon, the bright, the vast,
Lead me the happy bondmaid of thy will?
Why wilt thou put me from thee? What dire ill
Have I wrought on thy heart? I hold thee fast,
And cling and cry till life's last hope is past,
And faith grows sick with fears that scorch and kill.
Is thy God cruel, that this needs must be?
Canst thou forget the love, the dear delight,
The song, the dance, the mirth and minstrelsy,
Wherewith the swift days fled, too brief and bright?
Shall not our babes' sweet voices cry to thee,
Through all the hollow watches of the night?

AT SUNSET

NOW that the toilful day is done,
I rest me here awhile,
And loose my burdens, one by one,
Where the slant sunrays isle
This little bosk in meadows fair,
Far from the noisy beat
Of clashing hoofs, on pavements bare,
And tread of hurrying feet.

Cool waftures from the twilight wood
Breathe balm upon my eyes;
The shy sweet peace of solitude
Like dew about me lies;
Thin vapors lift their filmy veils
Upon the evening air,
And every conscious bloom exhales
The perfume of a prayer.

VANISHED

IT was but yesterday I saw his sheep,
The while he led them up the height to feed,
And heard him merrily pipe upon his reed,
And mock the echoes from yon rocky steep;
'Twas yesterday I found him fast asleep,
His flock forgot and wantoning in the mead,
His pipe flung lightly by with idle heed,
And shadows lying round him, cool and deep.
But though I seek I shall not find him more,
In dewy valley or on grassy height;
I listen for his piping—it is o'er,
From out mine ears gone is the music quite;
There on the hill the sheep feed as before,
But Pan, alas, has vanished from my sight!

A VOICE FROM RAMA

O LITTLE face in darkness hid away;
O shining head, thy pillow now is cold;
Fond eyes, that shall not greet the waking day,
About thee lie the shadows, fold on fold.

I cannot touch thee, darling, though I lean
Till in the grass above thee my sad brow
Is buried quite; alas! the baffling screen
Is ne'er removed; I cannot reach thee now.

How strange it is, to thee I am so near,
And yet thou answerest not my soul's deep call;
Is the dark palpitant around thee, dear?
Dost feel my love like dew upon thee fall?

Thou liest quiet in thy narrow room,
Forgetting how Spring's mounting tides rejoice;
What weird is woven in thy starless gloom,
To seal thy rosebud lips and hush thy voice?

I hunger for thee, sweet; thy balmy kiss
My starved lips here shall never feel again;
The lyric music of thy feet I miss;
I listen for thy laughter all in vain.

I stumble on through blinding mists of tears,
In clamorous ways of toil, because I must;
Waste is the earth and void are all the years;
O child, my heart lies with thee in the dust.

SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

SING a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
Bees are in the clover, and clouds are sailing
high;

All the world's before us, there are birds in every tree,
And to the music that they make our hearts dance mer-
rily;

Lambs frisk in the meadows, and silver fishes gleam,
Hourly playing hide and seek, in every sunny stream.

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
On the upland pastures the dew is scarcely dry;
Who would mope in corners o'er dull and musty books,
When the flowers are blowing in a thousand fragrant
nooks?

Squirrels among the leafy boughs are leaping free from
care,

And butterflies are flitting through the summer air.

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
On the green slopes of the hills how to good to rest
the eye!

Leave awhile the tyrant lessons; barefoot o'er the grass
Chase the flying shadows, nor heed the hours that pass;
To the fields and forests hasten, lads, away;
Sing a song of sixpence—let us live to-day.

THE HEART OF A BOY

OUT of the leafy twilight, hearken! again and again,
Slaking the thirsty noontide, falls the melodious
rain

Of the wood-thrush where, in the coolness and green-
ness, he sits apart

And poet-like gives to the silence the wealth of his
affluent heart.

The shepherd that stands on the hillslope, over his
slanted crook

Leaning his shaggy bosom, listens, and hard by the
brook

The bell-wether leading the flock pauses a moment to
hear,

Dimly aware of the sweetness breathed in his sluggish
ear.

Hushed are the whispering leaves, and the waters that
softly creep

O'er the pebbles that gleam in the shallows murmur as
if in sleep,

And the frog on the oozy marge, with iris and reeds
overgrown,

Muffles his voice in his throat and lies as still as a
stone.

O grace of the halcyon day! O song from the dusk
 woodside!

To the naked sun-browned lad dabbling his feet in the
 tide,

However the years may run with error and sorrow rife,
Ye are a living memory—ye are a part of life.

The world may be swathed in vapors, or drowned in
 the rushing rain,

And eyelids heavy with weeping may watch for the
 dawn in vain,

Yea, quenched in tears as of blood may be many a
 later joy,

But never that song from the upland stored in the
 heart of a boy.

LOVE'S NAMES

THE names which from my heart uprise,
 Whene'er I think of thee,
Throb, like the dusk of star-lit skies,
 With ceaseless melody;

Names which 'twere past a mortal's skill
 To say or sing aright,
But which bright spirits breathe and thrill
 The raptured ear of night.

A SONG OF THE HILLTOP

TO the hilltop let us go:
Squirrels are hiding there, I know,
And in fir-trees thick and tall,
Hour by hour, the cat-birds call;
Bow and arrow in our hand,
On the hilltop let us stand.

Hunters blithe and bold are we,
And we range the forests free,
Each a merry Robin Hood,
Loving well the leafy wood;
Bearing still the self-yew bow,
To the hilltop let us go.

There the breezes fresh and sweet
Ripple o'er the fields of wheat,
And the mimic waterfalls
Leap and laugh with elfin calls;
Up, the day is in its prime,
They but lose who fear to climb.

A NATIVITY

HE came when the petals of the rose were blown
Down the long aisles of windy woodlands, where
The leaves fell thick as raindrops through the air,
And half-choked runnels made incessant moan.

He came, from Paradise but lately flown,
Upon his brow the halo angels wear,
And in his eyes the memory of the fair
Far scenes of blessedness that they had known.
O miracle of life, continued still,
Though earth's frail generations wend from sight,
And nameless shadows of the darkness fill
The orbs that turn toward the coming night,
Thine is the pledge that morn again shall thrill
Our wakened souls with music of the light.

CRADLE SONGS

I

HUSH-A-BYE, hush-a-bye, little feet, go
Down the cool slopes where the dream-flowers
grow,
Down to the stream where the sleep-zephyrs blow,
Low—ah, low—
Lighter than snow,
Brushing the slumber-dews, little feet, go.

Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, shut, little eyes;
Home to her nestlings the sparrow-bird flies;
Now with her cuddled lamb, stilling its cries,
Lies—ah, lies
Under the skies
The woolly ewe-mother; shut, shut, little eyes.

Hush-a-bye, hush-a-bye, little one, sleep;
Now the moon-shepherdess, barefoot Bo-peep;
Leads all her starry flock up the blue steep;
Sweep—ah, sweep—
Out to the deep,
Dearest of voyagers; little one sleep.

II

THIS is the road to Sleepy-town—
Barefoot-highway, dusky-brown,
Where the sandman waits with blinking eyes,
Selling fresh dreams from Paradise,—
“Who buys, who buys,
Fresh new dreams from Paradise?”

This is the road to Sleepy-town;
Shadows are falling over the down;
The night-moth flits and the black bat flies,
And the sandman follows with blinking eyes,—
“Who buys, who buys,
Fresh new dreams from Paradise?”

This is the road to Sleepy-town,
Where travelers go in a milk-white gown,
To enter the ivory gates that rise
At the end of the way where the sandman cries,
“Who buys, who buys,
Fresh new dreams from Paradise?”

III

WHAT do they do in Bylo-land,
 Silvery, shadowy Bylo-land?
They swing no bat, they fly no kite;
The tattered dolls are forgotten quite;
But out through the gates of the City of Night
The little ones glide in garments white
To beautiful Bylo-land.

What do they hear in Bylo-land,
Glimmering, mystical Bylo-land?
 Ah, little ears hear wonderful things;
 Snatches of song that mother sings
 When the light sinks low, and the rocker swings;
 And lullaby sounds from hidden springs
In the hills of Bylo-land.

How win them back from Bylo-land,
Magical, emerald, Bylo-land,
 When the last faint star in heaven dies,
 And the dusk grows wan where the mountains rise,
 When the great sun climbs the yellow skies,
 Then mother's kisses on drowsy eyes
Woo back from Bylo-land.

IV

WHISPER, whisper out of the west,
 Fold thy plumes o'er my birdling's nest,
Come, O wind, whence the poppies blow,
Come whence the lullaby fountains flow,

Come with kisses soft and sweet
For tired little eyes and tired little feet.

Whisper, whisper out of the south;
Drop thy balm on the wee red mouth;
Come, O wind, from the palm and pine,
From the trailing moss and the tangled vine;
Come with touches soft and sweet
On tired little eyes and tired little feet.

V

Sleep, sleep, my babe, night will not harm thee,
Nor care disturb thy happy rest;
Here shalt thou lie, here shalt thou warm thee,
Safe sheltered on thy mother's breast.

Sleep, baby, sleep, my heart thy pillow;
Thee love from evil hap shall guard;
The moon hangs bright o'er yonder willow;
Above, dear God keeps watch and ward.

O baby mine, what peace infolds thee!
Beneath thee is Love's tender arm;
The Gentle Shepherd sweetly holds thee—
He shields his helpless lambs from harm.

Then sleep, my babe, no tongue shall chide thee;
On thee shall blow no wind unblest;
O baby, in my heart I hide thee,
There make thy bed, there take thy rest.

VI

WHITHER stray you, dimple-feet?
Winds are blowing fresh and sweet
From the dim dream-mountains;
By what pathways do you go
Where the magic waters flow
From the cool sleep-fountains?

Far and fair the landscape lies;
Cloudless are the sapphire skies
Which lean softly over;
There bright birds that blithely sing,
Low of voice and light of wing,
Round you ever hover.

Tiny stranger, traveling still
From the dew-wet purple hill
Wreathed with bud and blossom,
When the shapes of sleep are fled,
Wake to find your little head
Safe on mother's bosom.

VII

Rock-a-bye, baby, thy cradle is green,
Over thy slumbers the cool branches lean,
Bees in thy bower are crooning their song,
Leaves whisper round thee all the day long.
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, blue are the skies,
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, shut, little eyes.

Rock-a-bye, baby, thy cradle is green,
Tiny brown mothers their soft feathers preen,
While the dear birdlings are hushed in the nest
And the light breezes blow out of the west,
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, blue are the skies,
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, shut little eyes.

"Rock-a-bye, baby, thy cradle is green,
Father's a nobleman, mother's a queen,"
Sweet as the dew in the cups of the flowers,
Love sheds its balm on thee through the bright hours;
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, blue are the skies,
Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, shut little eyes.

VIII

OVER and over, and under and under,
Sleep is a rover through dream-lands of wonder,
Over the rivers and over the leas,
Under the mountains and under the seas;
Out of the sunlight,
Into the dun night,
Sleep on wings downy-gray
Flits with my babe away.

Under and under, and over and over,
By meadows and mountains still loiters the rover,
Where through the buttercups yellow as gold
Winds the young lambs to the peace of the fold;
Out of the sunlight,
Into the dun night,

Sleep on wings downy-gray
Flits with my babe away.

IX

SLEEP, O my babe, not thine a manger
Where cradled lies thy helpless head;
No oxen low, dear little stranger,
And wondering stare above thy bed;
Thou need'st not weep;
Ah, slumber deep,
For fond hearts wake while thou dost sleep,
And light as dew drops shed from the skies
Love shuts the violets of thine eyes;
Not in a stall
Love's kisses all
As soft as rose-leaves on thee fall.

THE BETTER PART

FOR me the hearth-fire light,
The candle's glow;
For her the wintry night,
The drifting snow.

For me the fireside chair,
The open book;
For her the frigid air,
The churchyard nook.

For me the lowing kine,
The village bell;
For her the winds that whine
About her cell.

For me the shadowy rooms,
The nameless dread;
For her the starless glooms,
The narrow bed.

For me the lonely heart,
The aching breast;
Her's is the better part,
She is at rest.

SAPPHO

WHERE is that bay-crowned head supreme in
song?

The tides that darkle round the Leucadian steep
Lap her forever into deeper sleep;
About her heart of fire the cool waves long
Like cerements have been wound, and voices strong
Of winds and waters o'er her pillow keep
Their boisterous lullaby. That frenzied leap
From the hoar height, when sense of sharpest wrong
Ran in her blood like flame—the fears that strove
Within her stormy soul—the lyric tongue

Whose last high music rang through realms of love.
Till hushed by that sea-weird which o'er her flung
Its sudden doom,—ah, all the dole thereof
No equal tears have wept, no lips have sung.

COME SLOWLY, PARADISE

O DAWN upon me slowly, Paradise!
Come not too suddenly,
Lest my just-opened, unaccustomed eyes
Smitten with blindness be.
To those who from Time's penury and woe
Rise to thy heights afar,
Down which the floods of glory fall and flow,
Too great thy splendors are,
So grow upon me slowly; sweetly break
Across death's silent deep,
Till to thy morning brightness I shall wake
As one from happy sleep.
While still the grains sift from the crystal bowl,
Into the dark the feasters turn and go,

THE TWO SPIRITS

I DREAMED two spirits came—one dusk as night:
“Mortals miscal me Life,” he sadly saith;
The other, with a smile like morning light,
Flashed his strong wings, and spake, “Men name me
Death.”

AFTER THE FEAST

THE music dies, and one by one the guests
Rise and depart; the merriment is done;
Hushed are the mingled voices, songs and jests;
From the spent glass the noiseless sands are run.
Into the dark the feasters turn and go,
Some with brave smiles, and some with heavy eyes;
The drooping flowers are pale, the lights burn low,
And silence on the empty chambers lies.
The last "good-night" is said; closed is the door;
Then slowly, down the blossom-littered floor,
The weary master casts a wistful eye,
Peopling the gloom with ghostly company.

CLEOPATRA TO ANTONY

GO from me now; I will no longer feel
Your burning kisses on my fevered lips;
You shall not hold one moment ev'n the tips
Of my shut fingers, though you cry and kneel.
My face aches, and my tired senses reel;
Through all my veins a drowsy poison slips,
My sight grows dim with gradual eclipse,
For slumber on mine eyes has set his seal.
Get hence; I will no more to-night; the bars
Of love are placed against you now; go while
I hate you not, my Roman; the sick stars
Wax faint and pallid in the dawn's red smile.
Look! I am quenched in sleep, as nenuphars
Are quenched in the broad bosom of the Nile.

THE CHANGELESS ROUND

WHERE is the light that bathed of yore
This pathway through the glade—
The robe of glory nature wore,
Trailing in sun and shade?
And elfin minstrels wake no more
The pipes whereon they played.

O wizard memory! thine the spell
That, to the inner eye,
Calls up the scenes once loved so well,
Finding in earth and sky
The glow that in them used to dwell,
None other could descry.

Still sudden wonders thrill the air
And in the pulses beat;
Down woodland ways some wandering pair
The heart's dear lore repeat;
Young faces find each other fair,
And plighted troth is sweet.

Time ever treads his age-long round;
Still morning, many hued,
Sows faery fires along the ground
Where they of old were strewed;
And love, so oft in cerements wound,
Is endlessly renewed.

A POET'S GRAVE

I

AY, grant it, friend, it is a lowly bed,
Pranked with the daisies that he held so dear,
And with the pale, pure violets nodding near,
Like those he clasped when first they found him dead.
To curious questioners let it be said:

“He sang his songs the world paused not to hear,
And now he lieth where no late, slow tear
Can answer for the love he sought instead.”
Young? Yes, ah very young he was to die;

He had so much to live for! His was joy
Unspeakable to see the morning lie

Upon the hills, and bliss without alloy
To see the sunset flush along the sky;

But dawn nor dusk shall wake him now—poor boy!

II

He loved the sunlight and he loved the rain;

He loved the darkness and he loved the light;

He loved the morning and he loved the night;

He loved the meadows and he loved the main.

To see the springtime blossom he was fain,

And winter's snows were goodly in his sight;

Yea, all the seasons in their rapid flight

Brought joy to him, though not unmixed with pain.

But now he lieth where the fallen leaf
Begets no vague regret within his breast,
And never summer-tide, however brief,
Can mar the sweetness of his hallowed rest.
He sleeps secure from dreams of joy or grief,
And in his dreamless slumber he is blest.

HER HOME-COMING

WHERE, on green banks, through still and dreamy
hours,
The yellow sunlight slumbered all day long,
Steeping in golden mists the drowsy flowers,
Hushing in sweet content the whitethroat's song,
Now cool soft flakes are slowly sifted down
Round withered stalks and branches bare and
brown.

But though, with trailing clouds and frowning skies,
Winter hath come to shroud the world in white,
Within my singing heart old splendors rise,
And June still bathes the world in rosy light;
For one dear face that vanished with the May,
After waste, weary months, returns today.

THE SPINNING WHEEL

HOW oft of yore her gentle hand
Guided the slender thread,
As the wheel, swiftly whirling, fanned
The curls about her head.

Her eyes, like dew-wet pansies, shone
With innocence and truth;
Her brow, pure as white roses blown,
Was wreathed with virgin youth,

Here, when the evening skies were clear,
In yonder wicker chair
He sat and watched her, leaning near,
And deemed naught else so fair.

Fled are the days of long ago,
The morning's vanished prime;
Nor summer's sun, nor winter's snow,
Brings back the old sweet time.

Long since the busy wheel was still,
And dust lies round it deep,
While star-eyed daisies, on the hill,
Lean o'er her quiet sleep.

LONGFELLOW

(March 24, 1882)

WITHIN the old historic house he lay,
Quiet at last in restless heart and brain;
Without his chamber the wan light did wane
And the March twilight gathered, chill and gray.
But all unheeding of the wasting day,
He lay and slept; and still he sleeps; in vain
The morning sun shall gild his window-pane—
His soul hath fared forth on an unknown way.
O sweetest psalmist of our Israel,
What new glad words now thrill upon thy tongue!
In what far country hast thou gone to dwell?
Through what fresh changes are thy numbers rung?
Lo! thou didst leave us, taking no farewell,
And now we weep that thy last song is sung.

"SWEET ARE THE USES OF ADVERSITY"

YEA, could it be, yea could it be, that so
From out this weltering rout of nights and days,
From out this wild and melancholy maze
Of thorny paths that wander to and fro,
We might at will to some fair country go,
Where hour by hour around the bloomy ways
The jasmine-scented, happy wind-breath plays,
And gurgling waters past broad meadows flow—

Then, would it better be, thus from this round
Of conflict, toil and tears, wherein men's thews
Are tried, to go where peans ne'er shall sound,
Nor gentle Pity weep her precious dew?
Ah no!—flowers crushed against the unconscious ground
Give back their perfume to the feet that bruise.

BLIND

WHEN first my soul into the shadows sank,
And darkness surged upon me like a wave,
I fought the blackness, as a swimmer brave
Who, losing from his grasp the friendly plank,
Goes struggling down through ocean's great gray blank.
Then, as one buried trance-bound in a grave
Wakes to the horror of his narrow cave,
And shuddering in his cere-cloths, cold and dank,
Strives to pierce through the void and noisome gloom,
I strove to cleave the night that wrapped me round,
And cried aloud from out my living tomb.
But now, always in solitude profound,
I sit and wait beneath my awful doom,
Till God's light shall break on me like a sound.

THE DEEPER WISDOM

THE little winds are shivering
Across the fresh young grass,
And wandering breaths of morning bring
Cool earth-scents as they pass;
And from the close I hear them sing,
My little lad and lass.

For vernal ardors in their veins
Are rioting to-day;
The light feet of the April rains
Dance round them where they play,
And swelling buds peep out again
With frolic hints of May.

And life is quickening in the sod
And flashing in the rills,
And where the feet of morn have trod
A new strange wonder thrills,
As down green slopes the signs of God
Are set along the hills.

And still my little girl and boy
Are glad, yet know not why;
Enough for them the moment's joy,
The smiling field and sky;
Wiser than we whom doubts annoy,
Who hear the old, sad cry.

CRÆSUS

(B. C. 546)

“O SOLON! Solon! wist ye of this hour,
When midst the splendors that thine eyes did see,
Undazzled by my gilded vanity,
Thou yet didst say how fleet is human power?
Lo! from this funeral pyre each flashing tower,
Each sapphire dome, each gate of ivory,
Makes all my court a hateful thing to me,
While here in death's grim shadow now I cower.”
So Cræsus cried when fiery death was nigh,
Remembering Solon's words of long ago;
Then the great Persian king, who paused hard by,
Heard the sore wailing of his fallen foe,
And said: “Unbind him thence, he shall not die;
Behold, one day I too shall be brought low!”

THE ANGEL OF NIGHT

WITH dusky pinions spread, from out the land
Of twilight glides the angel of the night,
And earthward softly plumes her silent flight,
While gathering darkness from her wings is fanned
Across the cloud-world, musically and bland.
Around her flow her garments, sprent with stars,
As far away, toward the sunset bars,
She takes her noiseless flight, and from her hand

Scatters the balm of sleep on all below.

From off her wings she winnows silver dew
On slumbering flowers, whose aromas go

Far in Æolian wanderings, breaking through
Melodious silence in faint ebb and flow,

Till fair Aurora peeps from eastern blue.

GRAPES OF ESCHOL

WONDERING they came; they had strange tales
to tell

Of purple hills and valleys half divine,

Of amber plains which did like morning shine,

And cool, clear springs which ever did upwell.

Wistful they came; and 'twixt them, like a bell,

Swung downward the dark grapes, the goodly sign

Of plenty in a land of oil and wine—

The goal of rest to way-worn Israel:

So I, a spy from realms where Summer sings

'Mid billowy fields with radiant blossoms starred,

Bring these the promisers of rare things

That wait the coming of the chosen bard—

The shining soul who seeks life's mystic springs,

And counts no knowledge vain, no journeys hard.

NATURE'S CHILD

SHE grew in beauty like a flower;
Her spirit, sweet as morning air,
Caught sunshine from each aureate hour,
Prospered by nature's fostering care.

Some magic touch of woodland grace,
Some hint of leafy mysteries,
Had left its impress on her face,
Its memory in her shadowy eyes.

A haunting sense of things akin;
Of mossy banks and bosky dells,
Of gnats that in slant sunrays spin,
Of rillets chiming crystal bells;

Of rosy mists that wrap the morn.
Of shimmering waves and burnished wings,
Of dew upon the tasseled corn,
Of rushes where the gossamer clings—

All these were broidered o'er with light;
She wreathed with bloom each common day,
Until, elusive as a sprite,
On truant feet she tripped away.

For nature breathed her darling's name
And called her far; yet, we can see
Her presence, like a lambent flame,
Transfused through all fair things that be.

THE SHELL

THE world is but a hollow breathing shell
By some chance wave cast on these shores of
time,

Still keeping in its ever-haunting chime
The tameless voice of chaos' ancient spell.
At whiles in its dark concave thunders swell,
Waking the echoes of creation's prime,
And solemn memories of that day sublime
When through void gulfs of space light did upwell.
Lo, evermore within the heavy ear
Of sleeping, sodden, crass mortality
It sobs its ceaseless warning, year by year,
That o'er it once again shall heave night's sea;
And whoso hearkens, hushed and tense, may hear
The awful whispers of eternity.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

IN silence and in darkness, hour by hour,
Unseen beneath the winter's ermine mask,
To bring again the swelling bud and flower,
Nature has wrought at her unending task.

No grass-blade groping towards the light above,
No rootlet feeling for the vernal rains,
Shall miss her secret ministry of love,
Fed by the subtle ichor of her veins.

Ah, can it be, when at her quickening breath
The world's vast pulses wake, and thrill, and leap,
Our loved ones, in the viewless halls of death,
Alone shall lie sealed in unbroken sleep?

Nay, let us trust the soul's divine desire:
Beyond our fluttering hopes, our faltering lore,
God's power shall lift us like celestial fire,
And mounting life shall triumph evermore.

THE BELATED PIPER

I KNOW that mine is but a bubbling pipe,
Blown in some lonely valley where the trees,
And flowers, and grass, and vagrant birds and bees,
Alone the music hear; long since was ripe
The time for piping; now swart fingers wipe
The sweat from labor's brow, and weary knees
Faint in the market-place; yea, none seek ease
By streams where still some simple antitype
Of happy Pan trims him a slender reed
With nimble hands, and softly, sweetly winds
A tremulous melody. Yet every weed,
All common wayside herbs, and careless vines,
Teach the deep secret of our human need—
The calm man ever seeks but never finds.

REED VOICES

*'Mid the dusk reeds that fledge the twilight streams,
Nature's wild troubadours, the breezes, make
Such sweet strange songs as echo through our dreams,
And haunt our baffled memories when we wake.*

MY KINDRED

WHERE in forests deep and still
 Slants by mossy rims a rill—
 Where the fronded ferns are stirred
 By the swift, low-winged bird—
 Where amid the cloistered trees
 Dart the honey-seeking bees—
 There I know my kindred be,
 There they ever beckon me.

I am kin to sylvan things:
 Where the vine-wrought roofing swings
 O'er dusk coverts leafy-green,
 And shy creatures frisk between
 Dewy sward and swaying limb;
 There from chambers cool and dim
 Many a pair of twinkling eyes
 Meet my own without surprise,
 And my kindred welcome me
 To their woodland revelry.

I am kin to every flower
 Shedding perfume hour by hour,
 Kin am I to grass and weeds,
 And the drowsy-whispering reeds;
 To the streams that part and meet,
 To the wind-blown fields of wheat,
 To the tresséd ranks of corn,
 To the midnight and the morn.

Me the pleasant south-wind knows;
And the breath that shrewdly blows
Over many a frozen firth
Of the rude and ice-girt north,
Deftly as the hands of Time,
On my temples sifts its rime.

I have glimpsed a smiling face
Peering forth from many a place
Where thick vines and saplings grow;
And where tell-tale banks of snow,
Piled in hollows soft and deep,
Prints of lightest footsteps keep,
I have traced with subtile care
Trailing garments light as air.
Bending an attentive ear,
Through the thickets I can hear
Sounds of laughter, clear and fine;
And by tokens I divine
Truths unknown to human speech—
Secrets that my kindred teach!

ELUSION

A SPIRIT stirs the summer grass,
And whispers to me as I pass;
I catch the gleam of flying feet,
I smell a perfume warm and sweet.

A sudden light, a rustling sound,
Fleet swiftly o'er the dewy ground,
And fade in yonder copse away,
Where lurking shadows cheat the day.

What eye hath seen that dimpled face?
Who yet hath found the secret place,
That refuge in the dim, cool shade,
Where flees and hides the laughing maid?

Ah, happy poet who may guess
The ever-changing loveliness,
The lightsome grace, the airy wiles
Wherewith coy nature masks her smiles,
And, stealing on her unaware,
Behold her when she is most fair!

APRIL

NOW on the slopes her tender feet are pressed;
Her mistlike garments stream upon the breeze;
Her hair is blown across her rosy breast,
Where fall the shadows of the budding trees.

The light of hope shines in her dewy eyes;
She breathes the promise of the vernal day;
And as she fares beneath the dappled skies
Unconsciously she trolls a little lay.

She knows where springs the earliest daffodil,
Where the young crocus lifts its whispering flame;
And as she slowly climbs from hill to hill,
A thousand happy voices flute her name.

The bleak and darkling days are overpast;
Music outflows from founts long sealed and dumb;
Soft airs blow sweet where shrieked the icy blast;—
O wintry heart, thine April, too, is come.

IN SUMMER FIELDS

BENEATH a leafy thatch to lie
 And watch the pageant of the sky,
 The banners of the morning light,
 The kindling splendors of the night;
 To see the lavish summer spread
 Its pomp above one's quiet head;
 To learn the secrets of the ground
 From myriad elfin voices round;
 To lie for happy hours and hours
 'Mid fresh, soft-bedded herbs and flowers,
 And see the insect armies pass
 Along the highways of the grass;
 To spy among the tangled weeds
 The nimble finches gathering seeds,
 Or, lost in grassy solitudes,
 Some monster of the mimic woods;
 To lie, and neither waks nor sleep,
 But feel the pleasant coolness creep
 Like waters o'er one's placid face,
 And murmur round his resting-place,—
 What deeper, what diviner bliss
 Could weary mortal ask than this?

THE MAGIC TOUCH

THE eyes which love anoints shall ever see
That which from other eyes must hidden be;
The brook that dimples o'er its silver sands,
The leaf stirred by the wind's invisible hands,
The braided gnats in their delirious dance,
The water-weed that poises its green lance,
The bird that flashes by on slanted wing,
The tender emerald of the bryony-ring,
The belted bee with pollen-burdened thighs,
The sunlit vans of wheeling dragon-flies,
The lucent wave that lifts its feathery surge,—
These to the heart whose vision love shall purge
Make swift revealments of a Presence near
Unnoted by the grosser eye and ear.
For love-led feet in astral pathways tread;
In their own seasons starry dew is shed
On life's stale dust, and down melodious ways
Rare blooms and perfumes break through common days.
Yea, shot through secret bowers, a sudden light
Falls like a glory on the raptured sight,
Till clods, and herbs, and meanest things of earth
Transfigured glow in a celestial birth.
O wizard, touch our eyes as 'twere with fire,
Till all this old world's wonder and desire
Beat up in awful splendor through the sod
Whereon in silence walk the feet of God.

THE ENDLESS RENEWING

LONG, long ago such mornings broke;
 On jeweled slopes strange fires awoke;
 Up from the south warm odors streamed,
 And 'mid green fields far waters gleamed.
 The dogwood through its leafy bars
 Shook out its immemorial stars,
 While from their cool nest-cradling boughs
 Small minstrels piped their lyric vows.
 Soft showers caressed the laughing world;
 The ferns their feathery fronds uncurled;
 The osier poised its slender lance;
 A thousand wings, with gleam and glance,
 Pulsed onward where down pathways free
 The jocund hours danced gleefully.
 O wistful heart, be glad that yet
 The rainbow dreams, the sweet regret,
 Ghosts of dear memories that have died,
 Fond hopes that passed unsatisfied,
 Old ardors of the vanished prime,
 Breathe upward through the dust of time.
 For life is fresh, and love is new,
 And youth still keeps its vernal dew,
 And greets the season's pomp of green,
 Its aureate mists, its astral sheen,
 With the vague wonder and delight
 Which years can never banish quite,
 While quickens in the kindling blood
 The rapture of the swelling bud.

THE WOOD-THRUSH

WHAT a spacious realm is thine,
For that minstrelsy divine!
In the dusk far solitudes
Of the cool untrodden woods—
Haunt of gnat and sylvan bee—
Thou dost choose thy privacy.

Somewhere caught within thy throat
Is the myriad, liquid note
Of the raindrops 'mid the leaves,
Slipping down from emerald eaves;
And the runnel's roundelay,
Rising, falling, night and day.

Clear as rings a crystal bell
Is thine iterant ritournel;
Ripening nuts in coverts green,
Whispers where the flowers lean,
Voice of water, wind, and tree—
Music heard of none save thee.

Thou dost ponder, o'er and o'er,
All the strange, elusive lore
Of each shy, wild, furtive thing
Light of foot or fleet of wing;
And thy song, remote, withdrawn,
Greets the evening and the dawn.

Would that we thy calm might share—
 We, the sons of toil and care;
 Soothed should be each aching breast,
 Hushed the fever and unrest,
 And from off the shadowed soul
 Doubts forevermore should roll.

Still our weary footsteps roam;
 Where thy mate is, there is home;
 And no darkening of the sky
 Bodes for thee disaster nigh;
 Though the tempest o'er thee rides,
 Naught may vex while love abides.

Thine, O thine the better part!
 Still unspoiled within thy heart
 Thou dost keep the old sweet song
 Chance nor change shall ever wrong.

* * * * *

There! it pulses once again;
 Listen! ah, that wondrous strain!

SLEEPYSIDE

PILED against the turquoise sky
Pearl-white banks of vapor lie;
Lazily a fickle breeze
Creeps along the dappled leas.
Midway of the sleepy stream,
Ruminating as they dream,
Stand the drowsy-lidded kine,
Shaded by a clambering vine.
On the gray roofs of the town
The high summer sun looks down;
Grass is growing in the street,
Where tanned reapers, with bare feet,
Faring fieldward slowly pass,
Or some brown, slim-ankled lass,
Loitering dreamily along,
Hums a half-forgotten song.
From the latticed porches come
Breaths of honeysuckle bloom;
Sunflowers doze beside the wall;
On the rick the sparrows call.
Here no sounds of sordid strife
Fret the peaceful ways of life;
Steeped in languor are the days,
As yon slopes are steeped in haze;
Heeded less the passing hours
Than the sunshine on the flowers—

Than the bee with dusty thighs
 That across the meadow flies,
 Pouncing like a burly lover
 On a nodding crimson clover.
 Somewhere 'mid the shadows deep
 Time has fallen fast asleep,
 And his idle scythe and glass
 By him lie upon the grass;
 Thus forever let him bide
 In thy thralls, O Sleepyside.

THE MIRACLE

HEARKEN! the ancient cry!
 A call from the heart of the wood;
 'T is heard in the deeps of the conscious sky,
 In the quickening solitude.

My soul, attune thine ear;
 Thou know'st the signal well;
 The birth of Spring's first flower is near—
 The world-old miracle.

DRIFTING

ATHWART the silver dusk the fireflies float;
The crescent moon, above the shadowy hill,
Sails slowly downward like a little boat;

The winds are sleeping, and the night is still,
Save when amid the reeds along the shore
A ripple washes, and is heard no more.

The summer stars peer down thro' heaven's gray veil,
And here and there, across the misty fen,

A strange light wanders, now afar and pale,
Now near and slowly waxing bright again.

Silent past many a fairy bower we glide,
Past rocking lily-pads and dipping boughs,

By wreathing vines that sweep the dimpling tide,
By smooth-mown meadows where the mild-eyed cows
Lie 'mid the dews and take the night's sweet breath.

A subtle perfume, from the distant woods,

Steals lightly by and swiftly vanisheth
Into the night's unfooted solitudes.

Nature has charms the unanointed eye
May never see; by many a common stream

She sets her signs, and where her lovers lie
In secret places, there are lights that gleam
As beautiful and mysterious as a dream.

AN OATEN PIPE

THE Summer's surf against my feet
 In leagues of foam-white daisies beat;
 Along the bank-side, where I lay,
 Poured down the golden tides of day;
 A vine above me wove its screen
 Of leafy shadows cool and green,
 While, faintly as a fairy bell,
 Upon the murmurous silence fell
 The babbling of a slender stream
 In the sweet trouble of its dream.
 Then as the poppi'd noon did steep
 The breathing world in fumes of sleep,
 I shaped with fingers drowsed and slow
 An oaten pipe whereon to blow,
 And in the chequered light and shade
 Its wild, untutored notes essayed;
 But in the larger music round
 My slender pipings all were drowned.

NATURE

SHE clothes herself in meek simplicity,
 And o'er her lover spreads her hands to bless,
 When lo! her garments, rustling to her knee.
 Flash on his eyes her dazzling loveliness.

THE DEAD PINE

DARK against the brooding sky
Leans its scarred trunk silently;
Round each gaunt and twisted bough
No sweet breezes linger now.
Like a sin-tormented ghost
Prisoned on some twilight coast—
Withered palms and hopeless face
Pleading for a moment's grace—
So along the dim sky-line
Stands yon weird, misshapen pine.
Once the wood-bird's timid note
From its spicy glooms did float,
And the squirrel's shrill challenge rang,
As from limb to limb he sprang,
Ere along their russet bed
Its last scanty spikes were shed.
Now no voice of beast or bird
From its naked boughs is heard,
Save when, on its topmost height,
Fierce freebooter crows alight,
And with brawlings wild and rude
Wake the echoes of the wood.
Gone, forever gone, the years,
When amid its towering peers
It did hear the tempest rave,
As the storm-rack o'er it drave.

Now it recks not though the meek
 Violet brush with velvet cheek
 Its shagged bark, to kiss the spring
 Through its tough roots murmuring.
 Ne'er for it shall fall again
 Cooling dew nor freshening rain,
 Nor the healing light that shone
 In the summers dead and gone.

THE HIDDEN JOY

THE wan November sun is westering;
 The pale, gaunt year puts all her glory by;
 Beneath her pallid feet her vestures lie,
 And white and faint she stands a-shivering:
 And yet the world's great heart is quickening
 Beneath dead leaves and grass grown sere and dry,
 And through the silence of the sombre sky
 Throb swift pulsations of a forefelt spring.
 So all our sorrow hath a core of bliss;
 Some prophecy of pleasure tempers pain
 In every heart, and through our bitterness
 Strikes a fierce joy that not a pang is vain;
 Life hath no hidden good that life shall miss,
 For with all loss is mixed some god-like gain.

UNDISCOVERED

IF we had but eyes to see
What beside our path may be—
The frail lives that, to and fro,
O'er the mossy highways go—
Elfin things that, unafraid,
Scramble up a grassy blade,
Or in grottoes dim and small
Echoes wake with freakish call—
From new founts of happiness
We should quaff the streams that bless.

Joy the springing flowers feel
When the rain-clouds o'er them wheel—
How the curving rushes thrill
At the kisses of the rill—
How the leaves, when winds blow free,
Clap their tiny hands in glee—
All the gladness, pure and fine,
At our feet we should divine,
If we had but eyes to see
What beside our path may be.

If we had but ears to hear
The small voices, sweet and clear,
That ne'er cease by day or night,
The rude sounds which now affright

Would be hushed, while o'er the soul
 Silver symphonies would roll
 Like a tide, and sweep away
 Noises of the mart's wild fray.
 No more should our sleep be vexed,
 Nor our waking be perplexed;
 But an endless music beat
 From the dust beneath our feet,
 If we had but ears to hear
 Nature's voices, sweet and clear.

Had we hearts to understand,
 We should learn that, nigh at hand,
 Magic springs of bliss upwell,
 And from many a secret cell
 Nature yields to earnest quest
 Sovran balm for man's unrest.
 Love that never seems to be,
 Peace that ever seems to flee,
 Joy that masks a sunny face,
 Have their hidden dwelling-place,
 Not beyond the vaulted skies,
 But beneath our purblind eyes,
 And beside our very hand,
 Had we hearts to understand.

HEALING NATURE

“LIFT up your eyes and look upon the fields”
That laugh with flowers and, where the yellow
grain

Stands thickest, billow like the billowing sea.
There slides a stream that, like a silver blade,
Curves westward, and beyond the mossy bridge
An azure pool lies smiling at the sky,
Its bosom set with lilies as with stars.
The heavy mantle of the cool dark wood
Is scarcely ruffled by the idle breeze,
That touches here and there a swaying leaf,
And then is gone. The songs of myriad birds
Patter among the leaves, and slant like rain
Athwart the sparkling air. In piney dells,
A thousand censers, swung by unseen hands,
Send up their fragrance till the senses thrill,
And the blood leaps with every happy breath.
Come forth, O hopeless toiler! leave thy tasks;
Leave thy heartsickness, and the weary weight
Of thy dull cares; lo! get thee to the fields,
Where thou mayest lay thy forehead on the breast
Of healing nature. Thou are tired; come
And rest; draw into all thy veins the health,
The sweetness and the fullness of the life
That throbs in earth, in sky, in sea and air.

THE VEERY

HARK! that liquid dewy note
 From the privacies remote
 Of moist coverts, leafly-dim,
 Where the veery lifts his hymn
 To the morning; hour by hour,
 Fragrant balm from many a flower
 Lades those viewless argosies
 Bearing down each spicy breeze.
 Kingcups, violets, windflowers frail
 Watch o'erhead the white clouds sail,
 While the early bee's bassoon
 Swells and sinks like some sweet tune.
 Now afar, again more near,
 Hyacinthine, crystal-clear,
 O'er and o'er that one refrain—
 Voice of love's own tender pain—
 Hope's undying roundelay—
 Echoes in the ear of day.

ON THE CLIFF

A BIRD on yonder crag which fronts the deep
 Trilled a full hour his wild love-lay to me;
 So Sappho sang upon the wind-swept steep,
 Ere plunging hopeless in the gulfling sea.

MIDWINTER

SOFTLY the snow's light ermine wraps the fields,
Slow, flake by flake, descending from the clouds
That drape the leaden heavens; stark and cold,
The silent trees stand on the wintry slope.
The wind is laid, and all the world is still,
Save the low sound wherewith the naked bough
Lets slip its feathery burden to the earth;
The cock has ceased his challenge, and the dog,
Dozing beside the hearth, forgets to bay
The distant traveller; all is frost and hush.
Yet where the north's frore breath can never come,
In chambers dark beneath the frozen clods,
Small voices lift their elfin whisperings
From nested seeds and rootlets, breathing all
Of blooms, and vernal airs, and waking songs,
When Spring shall set her lyric feet once more
With life and beauty on the morning hills:
Listen, my soul, these voices are for thee.

THE MISER YEAR

THE miser year, amid his songless bowers,
With senile eyes gloats o'er his gathered gold,
And laughs and mumbles while, in rippling showers,
It sifts between his fingers thin and old.

NESTING TIME AGAIN

SWALLOW, swallow, from the distant lands
 Northward winging o'er the silver sands,
 Past the wine-dark stream and misty plain—
 Swallow, nesting time has come again.

As the pulsing sap mounts to the bud,
 Sudden longings stir within your blood;
 Sounds of singing rill and vernal rain—
 Swallow, nesting time has come again.

Happy visions, yours, of moss-grown eaves,
 Sunlight sifting through the flickering leaves,
 Watchful, busy mate and birdlings twain—
 Swallow, nesting time has come again.

CONTENT

ABREATH of flowers, a flawless sky,
 And tipsy bees carousing nigh;
 A vine o'erhead that weaves its screen
 Of flickering shadows cool and green;
 A muffled, silver-tinkling bell
 Where nibbling sheep climb yonder dell;
 A sinuous stream that laughs and bubbles
 And sings amid its foamy troubles;
 A hush of hours that softly steep
 The conscious world in fumes of sleep—
 Ah, these no anxious thoughts shall give;
 To-day it is enough to live.

THE REAWAKENING

A VOICE upon the hillside wakes,
A rill begins to laugh and leap,
And nature starts, and stirs, and breaks
The silence of her long, white sleep.

The soft, warm coverlet of snow
That veils her lovely limbs and face
She lightly flings aside, and so
Arises in her vast, nude grace.

But now her bright new robe of green
Is o'er her gleaming shoulders thrown,
And many a stream of silver sheen
Is girt about her like a zone.

Oh, she is fair; her cheeks and brow
Are softly bathed in April rain;
And, standing under yon green bough,
She hears the robin flute again.

Old memories kindle in her breast;
Her eyes look forth through floating tears—
Tears not of sorrow; she is blessed;
God gives her youth through all the years.

God gives her youth with each new spring;
Her winter's long, mysterious swound
Is but her life's refashioning—
A healing of time's every wound.

O soul, lift up thy voice and sing;
 The seasons utter forth this truth—
 Thy winter past, behold! one spring
 Thou'lt wake, clothed in immortal youth.

WHEN BLUEBIRDS FIRST APPEAR

WHEN bluebirds first appear,
 And flute o'er wasting snows
 Their greeting sweet and clear;
 When the first pale violet blows
 In the hollow under the hill,
 And the Earth's faint pulses stir and thrill,
 As Spring's light footsteps steal
 O'er meadows brown and stark;
 When o'er the budding orchards reel
 The throbbing stars through balmy dark,
 And the forest's humid gloom
 Is dense with rare perfume,—
 Then once again from its deep,
 Long, troubled, and sorrowful sleep
 My heart shall awake to mark
 How even the barrows of death
 Grow green at the Spring's warm breath.

SONG OF THE SPRING

BLUE lies the light upon the hills;
Keen scents of earth steal freshly up,
Mixed with the winy air that fills
The valley like a mighty cup.

Warm winds, blown hither from yon wold,
Come laden with the breath of flowers,
And songs of brooks are blithely trolled
Through all the slumb'rous, sunlit hours,

From far afield, yet sweet and clear
Above the mingled sounds of Spring,
Through all the mellow day I hear
The swinging sower lightly sing.

Like flakes of newly fallen snow,
The blossoms flutter from the trees;
And like far music, faint and low,
I hear the murmur of the bees.

Ah, soul! how good it is to be!
The pulses of the very sod
Awake, and stir mysteriously
Beneath the quickening breath of God.

There is no death; the years shall bring
Thee nearer to some viewless goal,
Where bloom perennial flowers of Spring,
And singing streams forever roll.

DANDELIONS

WHAT unseen power hath wrought this wondrous
change?

It was but yestermorn the dull brown mold
Grew by some sudden magic, new and strange,
Bright with these starry flakes of living gold.

Ah, can it be that olden tale is true?

Hath Phrygian Midas journeyed thro' the land,
And while men slumbered and the southwind blew,
Let fall these golden discs from out his hand?

EVENSONG

OVER the old, tired world the soothing night
Sinks softly down; still faintly glows the west;
The eager birds now cease their joyous flight,
And seek the loving shelter of the nest.
O heart, fret not; pause in the fading light;
This evening-time thou too shalt have thy rest.

Fieldward the cattle thrud their dewy way;
The evening star hangs in the quiet sky;
Athwart the leas the shadows long and gray
Stretch out like arms, and prone and darkling lie
Upon the unresting brooks; gone is the day;
O restless heart, thine evening, too, draws nigh!

A RAINY DAY

O BLESSED, blessed rainy day!
Here will I sit and while away
The sober morn in this warm nook,
And browse through some delightful book.

While steadily above my roof
The wind drives by in clashing proof,
And shakes from off the dripping leaves
Their chilly burdens round the eaves,

I'll sit and hear the rhythmic beat,
Hour after hour like tiny feet,
Of rain-drops slanting from a sky
O'er which low clouds troop ceaselessly.

My happy calm none shall invade;
Light Fancy now, all unafraid,
Shall weave her charm; her airy spell
Through these still hours shall prosper well.

While o'er their drenched and shifting beds,
The flowers droop their heavy heads,
And while behind their rain-plashed screen
The birds their ruffled plumage preen,

I sit in pleasant revery
Where books, like friends, smile down on me
And round me floats a perfume rare
From fairy censers swung in air.

O blesséd, blesséd rainy day!
 In yon dim west die not away;
 My dreamful spirit fain would keep
 Such simple pleasures, pure and deep.

AUGUST

SHE sits within the shadow of the vine,
 A swart young gypsy queen with turbaned head;
 About her knees her dusky hands are spread;
 Her somber eyes with inward ardors shine.
 The woodbine leaves already glow like wine;
 The parched blooms droop above their dusty bed;
 And still she sits, as one among the dead,
 And o'er the mown fields stares and makes no sign.
 An alien from a torrid clime, she knows
 Full well her empery is brief, and soon
 Where the shrunk stream amid its pebbles flows,
 And the cicada's challenge stabs the noon,
 Winter by night shall pile its drifting snows,
 And the frore North chant loud his icy rune.

THE BELATED DAFFODILS

WAKE, sister daffodilly, wake!
The buds their barren slumbers break;
The trailing willow, by the stream,
Roused from its long and wintry dream,
Shakes all its silken tassels free.
The robin's jocund minstrelsy,
And early bluebird's velvet note,
About the fields and orchards float.
No more the hurtling March winds pass,
But low, sweet sounds of growing grass,
Of rustling herb and tender flower,
Rise from the green turf hour by hour.
Wake, sister daffodilly, lo,
From out the south mild breezes blow;
Along the wood-paths, warm and wet,
Springs up the frail wood-violet.
Already from its soft brown bed
The crocus lifts its drowsy head,
And stares with slow and wondering eyes
Into the changeful April skies.
Wake, sister, here 'tis damp and dark;
Leap from thy chilly couch, and hark
How peal the waxen lily-bells,
To call us from our gloomy cells.
Too long hath slumber sealed our eyes;
Our mates have risen; let us rise

And take from hence our upward flight;
 Let us go seek the pleasant light.
 The cattle browse upon the hill,
 The blossoms nod beside the rill,
 The bee darts by on vagrant wing,
 The birds from dewy copses sing,
 And in fresh closes, to and fro,
 The whistling plowmen blithely go.
 Dear sister, from these chambers cold,
 Beneath the damp and gloomy mold,
 Where winter-tranced we long have lain,
 We'll flee to seek the light again.
 Dost see the day, dear, as we rise?
 Hark to the insects' mellow cries!
 Ah me, how sweet the south's warm breath!
 How fair is life! how dark is death!
 Lo, all the world is bourgeoning,
 And this, dear sister, this is Spring!

THE FIRST SNOWFALL

ONCE more the silent snowfall; heaven assoils
 Of shame alike bare field and naked tree;
 Thus o'er our banal lusts and sordid broils
 Falls the white mantle of God's Charity.

A SONG OF THE HILLS

FRONTING the wide-browed east they stand;
Slowly beneath God's mighty hand
They rose and took their shape; the dews
Distill upon them; heavenly blues,
And rainbow purples, from which lean the stars,
Lightly o'erarch them; down their rugged scars
Pour balms of dark and light.
How fair the sight
Of cliff and glen, of oak and pine,
And ever-upward clambering vine,
And long green sweep of brambly slope!
Where slanting sunbeams shyly grope
Through leafy screens, along its bed
Of moss, 'twixt gnarled roots, with stealthy tread
The cold stream seeks the vale.
Here, while the heavens yet are pale,
On her wide altars morning burns
Her mystic incense: through the ferns,
And flowers, and creepers, and thick boughs,
Old Nature's truest devotees
Send up their matin vows
And vesper harmonies,
Day after day.
From every dew-plashed spray,
From blooms where linger long the plundering bees,
From frail herbs crushed by careless feet,
And buds scarce breathed on by the breeze,
Exhale rare odors, fine and fleet.
Here, where the night and the morn first meet.

Are myriad melodies, wonderful, sweet.
 Hark! how the heart of the dawn doth beat!
 Whisperings, stirrings, rustling of wings,
 Sounds like swift fingers swept o'er a harp's strings—
 Sounds shot with silence, with silence that groweth,
 That round through the aisles and the dim arches
 floweth

Like a stream lapping low, laughing, loud 'mid the
 grasses;

 Till suddenly passes

A spirit that hushes one instant the breath
 Of the earth and the sky to the stillness of death—
 One instant a pause in the pulse of the dawn,—
 One instant the joy of awaking withdrawn.

 O moment supreme

 'Twixt waking and dream,

 'Twixt longing intense

 And throbbing suspense!

But listen! the liquid, soft note of a bird
 Wakes the world from its spell, then another is heard,
 Till lo, with a crash, from the sky and ground
 Bursteth a tempest of musical sound!

 O fear, thou hast fled!

 Thou, silence, art dead!

Thou, joy, hast awaked from the thralldom of sleep,
 And the dark tides of sorrow are turned back to the
 deep.

 Lay thine ear to the earth,

 And harken what mirth

Through fairy-land riots, because of the birth

Each moment of flowers and fair green things,
And the mystic unsealing of magical springs
 In the heart of the hills!
 What rapture thrills
Through the roots and stems of the braided weeds,
And quivers and shivers amid the reeds
 That watch by the streams,
 Because from their dreams
In the womb of the dark have been wakened to light
The souls of new plants to people the height.

 Here trade shall not come,
 And the voice shall be dumb
Of hard-hearted Thrift; yea, even the stroke
Of the ax that is laid to the root of the oak
 Shall sound muffled and far:
 For barter and gain
 Belong to the plain,
 And there they shall bide,
 Whatever betide.

 Here the wheels cannot jar
Of commerce that thunders and shrieks on its way,
But the tremulous shadows fantastically play
Through bickering leaves, and small black eyes
Twinkle from glooms where the dewberry lies,
And the garrulous squirrel, and the finch, and the jay
Gossip the fleet-footed summer away.
And here from the pearléd fields of morn,
On the viewless wings of the winds are borne
Perfumes sweeter than nard or myrrh.
O pungent fragrance of pine and fir!

What delicate scents from the indolent east,
That are shed from the Sultan, as he sits at his feast,
Can vie with the balsam's resinous breath
To quench in the blood the fierce fever of death?

Hark! while the dusk's pale curtain falls,
Across the dim, gray upland calls
The twilight-loving whip-poor-will.
O night, brood softly o'er the hill!
Fair night, your vast star-spaces fill
With tender light that shall not wane
Till morn shall wake the world again.
Thus in the shadow of God's hand,
While o'er the sky the dark is fanned,
Upon the hill-top let me stand.
How near is heaven! how near each star!
The noisy world how far! how far!
O soul, for flight thy wings expand;
Look yonder to the promised land;
From such a height, with fond desire,
Ere from the earth, in clouds of fire,
The ancient seer was rapt away,
He looked and saw the starry dome
And kindled glories of God's home,
Nor wished to stay.

O height! O height! thrice blessed height!
Upon thee calmly rest the night,
And sweetly break the morning's light

Above thee :
He who would flee the world's vain strife,
And find a larger, nobler life,
Must love thee.

NOW SLEEPS THE BREATHING EARTH

NOW sleeps the breathing earth
Above, like an inverted cup,
Smoke-stained and dim, upsoars the night-filled sky.
Swift to their birth
Come myriad ephenerae that die
Ere morn hath clambered up
The eastern crags to set her gonfalon
Against the clouds.
Behold, anon,
The mists wrap their cold shrouds
About the willows where the sobbing stream
Forgets its jocund day-song. Let me dream,
O let me dream, now that the dark is come;
Now that the stridulous voices all are dumb
Which maddened sunlit hours;
Yea, let me dream; the night-moths haunt the flowers,
While nesting birds stir on the sheltering bough,
And one large star, poised o'er the hill's dusk brow,
Glows like a lamp.
A fragrant damp
Falls on the world; O fevered breast,
Drink thou the balm of rest.

AD VESPERAM

*"Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
Als alle Knospen sprangen."*

WHERE has my morning with its music fled,
When sweet sounds swept like rain along the
hills,

When happy blooms with lucent dew were fed,
And tremulous laughter tinkled from the rills?

Then rainbowed vistas ravished Hope's young eye;
Green upland slopes were white with nibbling flocks;
O'er springing harvests bent the peaceful sky,
And nunlike violets smile by mossy rocks.

Then ran like wine the quick blood through my veins,
As spring's rich ichor shoots through root and bough;
My glad soul echoed back the thrush's strain,
And mocked the plowman whistling at his plow.

O morning time of youth! O voice of spring!
Vanished long since,—ah, long since fallen dumb!
Now sad and weary lips forget to sing;
The old sweet madness never more will come.

For the day droops and shadows are grown long;
In ruined gardens lies the summer's gold;
From the brown pasture dies the cricket's song,
And on wet banks the light lies gray and cold.

Round the shorn meadows sifts the early rime;
The hills are dark, and low clouds trail above;
Yet O my heart, sing in this evening-time,
Mid summer's tarnished glory dream of love.

DAWN

THE dews are sifted o'er the lawn,
Pale vapors fold the shadowy height,
And like a ghost the pallid dawn
Steals down the aisles of night.

Heaven's myriad torches quench their fires,
And yonder, o'er the earth's faint rim,
Where in the mist the moon expires,
The morning star grows dim.

The soft sleep-angel's dusky plumes
Glimmer along the silent way
She takes to lands of dreamful glooms,
Far from the garish day.

The hill-tops flush—the night is done;
A sudden bird-note, sweet and strong,
Rings out, till lo! beneath the sun
The world is drenched with song.

DUSK

THE silver dew lies on the grass,
 Above the hills the pale moon climbs,
 And where my eager footsteps pass
 The crickets cease their chimes.

I breathe a fine, faint scent of musk,
 And, while the shadows slowly fall,
 A little beck sobs through the dusk,
 And flitting night-birds call.

There flickering through the fragrant dark,
 In many a changeful, dizzy maze,
 I see the firefly's sudden spark
 Shine down the misty ways.

And this is night. O, may my eyes,
 When freed from all life's wildering spells,
 Behold the heavenly dew that lies
 On meads of asphodels.

A SONG OF THE WOOD

O JOY of the life of the wood!
O joy of the swift young blood
That throbs in the bough and the bole!
Mount into my shrunken veins,
And brim them as brooks by rains,
Or as rivers that seaward roll.
Let me feel again what the Spring
To the heart of the wood may bring,
How the April sun and rain
Are shed on no leaf in vain,
And in every clod doth beat
An influence deep and sweet.
Let me stand in the vernal air,
And the bliss of green things share;
Into the soft dark mold,
That wraps them, fold on fold,
Let the roots of my being go.
Now will I rise and grow,
As rapturously, hour by hour,
Grow grass and bud and flower.
No touch of the Spring shall I miss;
Me too shall the south-wind kiss,
Till my dwindled, pale desires
Shall kindle with leaping fires.

Here will I lie ;
 Above me the domed, diaphanous sky,
 Glimpsed through dark-braided boughs.
 O delicate-pure are the palmer-like vows
 Breathed through the glooms
 Where cloistered blooms
 Are screened from the fervid day.
 Thus will I drift away,
 On tides of fine perfumes,
 Slow—ah, slow—
 As the smooth waves flow,
 Out to the dim and mysterious deep,
 To the fathomless ocean of sleep.
 When Summer's riotous pulses beat,
 O wood, thou dost quaff the torrid heat,
 As men the sun-cored wine.
 Upward each spray of thine
 Is thrust to catch the sun, as flowers
 Hold fragrant cups to catch the showers.
 Blithe are thy sounds that spread
 Through arches dark o'erhead,
 Or 'mid grasses cool and long
 Break into endless song.
 Here in a sylvan dream
 Gurgles a slender stream ;
 Listen—ah, listen—how it sings,
 Winding downward from its mossy springs,
 Tinkling like a crystal bell,
 As its mimic billows swell,
 O'er slant pebbles, through lush weeds.

Or 'mid dense and glistening bredes
Of vines and wood-plants trailing low.
Now where stiller waters flow,
It scarce murmurs under breath
What the bland wind whispereth.
Here furred creatures come to drink;
Brown birds haunt beside its brink;
And where fairy bowers hide,
Frolic shadows wheel and glide
O'er the silver-ridgéd sands.
There thick ranks of osier wands,
Thrilled by Summer's warm desires,
Shoot their lithe and graceful spires
O'er the tide that purls between;
All day long they yearn and lean,
Swaying in the shade or sun,
Till the halcyon hours are done.
 Woodland noises,
 Meadow voices,
Fife of bee and flute of bird,
 Wafted hither,
 Echoed thither,
Rarer music ne'er was heard.
When the filmy moonbeams sift
Through the leaves that toss and lift,
Wandering lovers sometimes stray
By this hushed, sequestered way,
While the small voice of the rill
Mingles with their dreaming still.

Vanished all!

For now the days begin to fade and fall:

The birds are winging southward; on the plain

The pallid light lies cold; as one in pain

The stream moans by, and sad the pewee's call.

There where the dark wood skirts the meadow-lands,

 Joyless, with tarnished raiment, stands

 One wind-swept golden-rod.

 Upon the cumbered sod

 The dank leaves lie,

 And fitfully

Through naked trees wail Autumn gusts.

 The lichen rusts

On each stark bole, and day by day,

 O'er love's forsaken way,

 Drear in its solitude,

 The gray clouds droop and brood.

Yet when the snow shall choke the heapéd dells,

 And from the keen north swells

 An icy breath,

With threat of famine and frore death,

 Then like a gracious prophecy

 Of prosperous seasons yet to be,

Through storm-winds loud and rude

Shall breathe the benediction of the wood.

THE BLESSED ISLES

(Thousand Islands)

HERE beneath the violet skies
Dream the isles of Paradise;
Where the sapphire waters run,
Dimpling in the summer sun,
Countless white-winged shallops dance
O'er the river's broad expanse.
In this lotus-realm of peace
Life's sad mysteries find surcease;
Here the heart grows calm again,
After tempest, tears and pain,
And the soul's o'erclouded cope
Gleams with rainbow smiles of hope.
Let the frenzied world pass by,
Cheat and wrangle, fight and lie;
Here across life's turbid tide
Tranquil influences glide
From the drowsy hush that broods
O'er these charmed solitudes.
Not Avilion's meadowed calm
Could afford such sovran balm
For the eye distempered, blind,
And the self-sick, jaundiced mind,
As these billowy isles where play
Healing breezes day by day.

Love the shy forgets to wear
 His accustomed fillet here,
 And his eyes with rapture smile
 O'er each leaf-embowered isle;
 He this haunt his own has made,
 And within the dappled shade,
 When is stilled the oar's light beat,
 You may hear his accents sweet,
 As again the story old
 Into happy ears is told.
 O my spirit, long unblest,
 Fold thy wings, here take thy rest.

MORNING BY ONTARIO

THROUGH night's barred gates a venturous light
 doth break;
 The shadows vanish, and where far peaks rise
 A splendor burns along the opulent skies;
 The birds are stirring, and the winds awakè.
 Now burst the meadows into many a flake
 Of shifting fire, and still the old surprise
 Of morning kindles where a glory lies
 Upon the wrinkled bosom of the lake.
 As yon proud vessel parts with shining prow
 A backward-curling waste of molten gold,
 Down treading the smooth waves, so outward now
 A spirit-craft fares 'mid the strange lights rolled
 From other suns, while on my Love's dead brow
 The new day prints its kisses sweet and cold.

THE NEW DAY

HOW beautiful the summer morn,
With billowy leagues of wheat and corn!
The shining woods and fields rejoice;
Each twinkling stream lifts up its voice
To join the chorus of the sky;
O beautiful unspeakably!
In the dry cicada's notes,
In the thistle-down that floats
Aimless on the shimmering air,
In the perfume sweet and rare
Of the sun-steeped, dark-leaved trees,
Dwell the year's deep prophecies.
Hark! the clangor of the mills
Echoes from the drowsy hills.
The foam-white clouds, the smiling dale,
The dimpling waves, the laughing flowers,
The low, faint droning of the bees,
Mixed with sweet twitterings from the leas,
Conspire to charm the magic hours.
Under a spell the spirit lies;
Sundered is sorrow's misty veil;
To-day life is a glad surprise,
A tranquil rapture, fine and frail,
Wherein to joy-anointed eyes
The old earth seems a Paradise.

UNFORGOTTEN DAYS

O SWEET do-nothing days! I lie
 Beneath a cloud-filmed summer sky,
 And while the hammock idly swings,
 I hear the oriole as he sings,
 Perched somewhere 'mid the glossy leaves
 That yonder maple round him weaves.
 I know that soon the thin blue sleet
 Against the frosty panes will beat,
 And all the knotted limbs will clash
 As charging storm-winds through them crash;
 Yet I shall sit where flames upleap
 From ruddy coals, nor wake nor sleep,
 But dream of long, sunshiny hours,
 When unreaped fields were flushed with flowers,
 When every copse and tangled close
 Was sweet with balm of mint and rose,
 And some full-throated song's outrush
 Swift shattered all the noontide hush.
 So still within my heart shall be
 The summer's light and melody,
 The shy, soft winds that ever shift,
 And drowsy clouds that slowly drift,
 Though at my door grim Winter stand,
 And loudly knock with mailed hand.

A SONG OF MAY

IN the orchard close I see thee,
And along thy luminous way
The shadows arise and flee thee,
O delicate, blossoming May.

The dew on thy sandals glisten,
As, hard by yon shaggy bole,
Thou pausest a moment to listen
To the song of an oriole.

The pink apple-blossoms above thee
Tremble to touch thy hair,
And the sweet south winds that love thee
Are faint with the passion they bear.

O fair is thy face, and tender
The light of thy laughing eyes,
From the deeps of whose azure splendor
Wells ever a glad surprise;

For the ways of thy life are sunny,
Nor dimmed by thy crystalline showers,
And thy footsteps, 'mid perfume and honey,
Are jewelled with radiant flowers.

Not so was the troublous morning
That dawned on thee first, O sweet,
For thy birth-star rose lurid with warning,
And thy birth-song was singing of sleet.

But terrors of storm could not fright thee,
 Thou child of the tearful Spring,
 Nor frost in its cruelty blight thee,
 For thou heardest the orioles sing.

And now the drear days of thy sadness
 Are vanished as phantoms afar,
 While forth in thy beauty and gladness
 Hope beckons thee, chaste as a star.

And thy feet press the odorous grasses
 That spring on the uplands and leas,
 And before thee the wind, as it passes,
 Scatters downward the blooms from the trees.

THE FRUITFUL YEAR

SHE stands amid her rustling stooks;
 On drooping leaves and berried vines,
 Where late birds sing in sunny nooks,
 She sets her mystic signs.

Her ample bosom heaves and falls
 With the calm breath of sweet content;
 She hears the reapers' cheery calls
 With sounds of laughter blent.

Before her gaze fair visions rise:
 Garners with generous fruitage stored,
 And hearthfire lights in children's eyes
 Grouped round a smiling board.

SEED-TIME

THE fields lie swathed in misty blue;
Dim vapors crown the wooded height;
From every trembling spray the dew
Shoots back the morning's quivering light.
In hollows where the tender fern
Uncurls beside the glimmering burn,
The cool gray shadows linger yet,
To kiss the pale young violet.
Hark! singing through the orchard close,
And whistling o'er the furrowed plain,
The lusty sower blithely goes
To drop the golden grain.

Clear morning sounds are in the air;
The birds their jocund matins swell;
Each stream makes music fine and rare;
Each fountain rings its crystal bell.
Sweet from the blooming apple-trees,
Come elfin quirings of the bees,
And from far uplands, faintly borne,
Float mellow greetings to the morn.
O tuneful world! each wind that blows
Brings from the field a glad refrain,
Where, singing still, the sower goes
And drops his golden grain.

HARVEST

THE hills are steeped in slumberous haze;
 The wind is breathing soft and low;
 On tranquil slopes the cattle graze;
 Through twinkling light the waters flow.
 About the meadows, smoothly shorn,
 The cricket winds his cheery horn,
 And o'er the calm expanse of sky
 The filmy clouds drift lazily.
 Across the smiling valley—hark!
 How steals the echo, sweet and long,
 Of those who sing from morn till dark
 The happy harvest song.

The mossy barns, with heapéd floors,
 Amid the peaceful landscape lie;
 The doves wheel through the open doors;
 About the eaves the swallows fly.
 Now slowly rolls the creaking wain
 Up from the yellow fields of grain,
 Where swart-armed reapers gayly sing,
 And sturdy sickles glance and ring.
 O liberal earth! O fruitful days!
 Each wind that stirs the rustling leaves
 Bears round the world the grateful praise
 Of those who bind the sheaves.

A DAY OF DREAMS

THE sunshine lies athwart yon emerald bosk,
Where blithesome runnels dance from out the
dusk
Of greenery spired like an eastern mosque,
And o'er the fields the winds steal, faint with musk.

The sun, midway upon his tireless march,
Eyes languidly the green earth's sleepy face,
But the fond sky, with arms in dreamy arch,
Stoops down to take her in its soft embrace.

Lo! lying yonder in an azure swoon,
Where earth and sky in misty outlines merge,
I see the narrow, curved, white summer moon,
Pale and uncertain, o'er yon western verge.

Dim is the circuit of the far-off hills,
From whose light crests the thin, blue forests fail
In distance, and beyond the sunlight fills
The white-winged clouds that o'er the heavens sail.

The yearning willow bends each leafy spray,
And softly dips it in the sliding wave,
And on yon pebbly marge, across the way,
Two little wrens their soft brown pinions lave.

A slumberous silence steeps the summer noon,
 Save the cicada's piping, shrill and long,
 And now and then a hautboy's drowsy tune,
 In fitful snatches of an old love-song.

O day of dreams, thou are not wholly lost;
 When winter winds shall wax through sleety rain,
 And all the flowers lie dead beneath the frost,
 In memory I shall live thee o'er again.

ONE WITH NATURE

O WIZARD Nature, make me one with thee;
 One with the rolling earth, the leafy trees,
 One with the winds that breathe soft melodies,
 One with the vital sunlight, large and free.
 I would the springing grass were part of me,
 The brook-flags waving in the errant breeze,
 The daisies burning star-like on the leas,
 The cool gray forest's gloom and mystery.
 I would my heart should pulsate with the beat
 Of ocean's mighty throbbing; I would go
 Where'er thine influence should lead my feet,
 As roving streams still seaward ever flow.
 Dear Nature, warm me with thy generous heat,
 And into thine own being let me grow.

MORNING

THE mist-born shapes of dawn about them wrap
Their great gray cloaks and silently depart.
The dew-drops, one by one, slip off the spray,
As from the fullness of his mighty heart
The sun doth kiss earth's glittering tears away,
And, smiling, fling bright jewels in her lap.
Across the fields the chore-boy's merry call
Comes ringing, and the milkmaid's early song,
Mixed with the lowing of the distant kine.
The morning-glories on the mouldered wall
Are open, bathing in the golden shine,
And turning from light Zephyr's amorous arms,
Bare all their bosoms to the roving bee.
The meadow brooks bound cheerily along
And kiss the timid flowers as they flee,
Leaving them weeping at a trust betrayed.
Pale, sad-eyed Phosphor in the east hath died;
Dimmed by sweet morning's fuller, fairer charms,
Hath drooped and faded like a love-sick maid.
Along the river-shallows herons wade,
And on the wave the water-lilies ride,
And by the shore the silent plover steals,
Or thither comes a thirsty wren to drink.
Ah me, how glad the morn! The breath of day
Brings to the wakened world its healing balm,
And softly breathes the fevered sleep away.

From some wan sufferer's dim and hollow eyes.
Up from the village mellow murmurs rise,
And from yon hillside, where the white flocks stray,
A single distant bell, now faint, now clear,
Blends its sweet cadence with the morning calm.
Life bubbles up and overflows its brink;
In every heart hope sings, and love is dear
Where'er o'er earth the morning angel flies.

NIGHTFALL

DESCEND, O dewy twilight, o'er the hills,
With kisses soft and cool; the whip-poor-wills,
Deep-buried in the bosom of the vale,
Wait for thy coming, and the young moon, pale
And dimly crescent, o'er the vapory height
Climbs slowly up, wreathed in her own faint light.
The voices of the day are quenched in sleep;
Along the dusky slopes the peaceful sheep
Feed 'mid the shadows, and anon is heard,
Waking to sweet complaint some drowsy bird,
The mellow tinkling of the leader's bell.
Upon the gloom now softly sink and swell
The cricket's slender vespers, and afar,
As if to mock eve's solitary star,
Or echo back the watch-dog's distant howl,
From yon lone wood the hooting of the owl
Deepens the hush and loneliness of night.
Upon the lawn, the roses, red and white,

Sift their light petals o'er the beaded grass,
And on the poppied breezes, as they pass,
Breathe out the musky secrets of their hearts.
Now on his quest the wheeling bat departs
With beating wings, and countless beetles boom
Headlong across the fields. The purple gloom
Thickens upon the landscape; in the skies
The tardy stars come out, and murmurs rise
From streams that through the curtained darkness flow,
Fretting among their pebbles as they go.
In the still orchards, and the meadows damp,
The fitful firefly kindles his small lamp,
While o'er the marish comes the ceaseless sound
Of piping voices. From the dew-drenched ground
A subtle incense rises, and the air
Is laden with a perfume keen and rare.
Low in the west the embers of the day
Die darkly down; a mist hangs, chill and gray,
Above the silent river's sleepy tide,
Whereon the folded water-lilies ride,
And the tall flags, stirred by the curling waves,
Whisper together. Where the current laves
The trailing branches of yon rustling tree,
Floats a thin sound of airy revelry,
And in a dizzy maze the singing gnats
Dance slowly off across the reedy flats.
How beautiful is the dark! the gradual calm
Steals into all the blood, and, like a balm
The crystal drops of night wide o'er the land

Are scattered, as by some invisible hand.
 Welcome, O dark! Tired heart, thou too art blest;
 After the weary day, night brings thee rest;
 After the wildering tumult, strife, and heat,
 The coolness comes, and silence soft and sweet.

A HINT OF WINTER

NOW in the wood the partridge drums;
 Across the stubbly ground
 The wary hunter lightly comes
 And scarcely wakes a sound.

The forests flame along the hill,
 And from the rustling trees
 The leaves drift down and choke the rill,
 Or frolic in the breeze.

The sumacs kindle by the streams;
 Beneath the chilly noon
 One joyless blossom stands and dreams
 Of days that passed too soon.

A whisper stirs the naked hedge,
 And o'er the faded fields,
 Around the pool, amid the sedge,
 A hint of winter steals.

THE WANING YEAR

BY this we know the year is growing old:
The mists droop from the hills in many a fold;
In mournful monotone the crickets sing;
The fitful winds vague premonitions bring.
Across the tideless azure of the skies
Less lightly sail the cloudy argosies.
The golden-rods, beside the plaintive stream,
All day within the pallid sunshine dream
Of brighter hours, when through the drowsy noon
The whetted scythe rang out its merry tune.
The hoarse cicada's strident note is heard
Amid the stubble, and a lonely bird,
Behind its fluttering screen of russet leaves,
Lifts up its solitary voice and grieves.
The year is not the same; the waning days
Are filled with sad desires, and o'er the ways
Where once love's happy feet were fondly set,
There broods a strange and shadowy regret.
Old memories waken; from the restless heart
Rise nameless longings, and the swift tears start
Unbidden for the joys that now lie dead
As yonder rose whose bloom long since was shed.

AN AUTUMN MORNING

I

NOW o'er yon hill the glad Aurora comes,
 Blushing from rosy cheeks to finger tips,
 And o'er the meadow, through the mist she slips
 Into the forest where the partridge drums.
 The humble bee above the holly hums;
 The willow in the river softly dips;
 Across the field the merry milkmaid trips,
 And on her shining pail she gently thrums
 An old love-ditty, wondering the while
 If Robin Gray will meet her at the stile.
 The lowing cattle o'er the sweet, late grass,
 With rattling hoofs press onward to the rill,
 Brushing the glittering dewdrops as they pass,
 Till at the bubbling stream they drink their fill.

II

Scarcely a bird-song in the sunlit air,
 Save now and then a mournful chickadee,
 Weeping its heart away in melody,
 Cries out the burden that it cannot bear.
 The forest trees upon the upland wear
 A gayer livery, and the eye can see,
 As higher up the sun climbs lazily,
 The stooks of corn stacked on the hillside fair.

The creaking wain rolls slowly toward the field,
Where tawny pumpkins doze beneath the sun;
Beyond, the patient cattle, one by one,
Stand waiting still their treasured sweets to yield,
Looking with wondering eyes; the maid the while
Kisses her Robin by the meadow stile.

SYRINX

LEAVE me to wither here by this dark pool,
Where the winds sigh amid the shuddering reeds,
And slimy things creep through the water-weeds,
And snakes glide out from coverts dim and cool.
Leave me, O Pan; thou hast been made the fool
Of thy hot love; go where thy white flock feeds,
And pipe thy ditties in the dewy meads,
And watch the silly sheep that own thy rule.
Get hence; I am become a loveless thing;
No charms of mine shall ever tempt thee more;
No more in valleys green and echoing
Shalt thou surprise and fright me, as of yore;
Go, clash thy hoofs, and make the woodlands ring.
But let me wither here on this dark shore.

NATURE'S RENEWING

BENEATH the drifted snow she keeps
 Her children safe from harm;
 Each folded germ securely sleeps
 In silence sweet and warm.

And when the laughing wind shall break
 The bonds of Winter's night,
 Then from their sleep the flowers shall wake
 To seek the pleasant light.

The Spring-time ever comes. O soul!
 Though loosed the silver cord,
 And shattered is the golden bowl,
 And on the trampled sward

The pitcher at the fountain lies
 Beside the broken wheel,
 O'er thee shall bend the kindly skies,
 And balmy breaths unseal

Death's frosty silence with a kiss
 Light as an angel's wing,
 And thou shalt wake 'mid tides of bliss
 To hear God's minstrels sing.

LEARNED AT LAST

'TIS written that the earth is Thine, O Lord,
The fulness thereof also; not a gnat,
Whose little life spans but an hour, and craves
The bounty of Thy sunshine, is denied.
In unregarded places, where no eye
Save Thine beholds, and where no voice is heard,
Save delicate, small whispers of the air
O'er dew-pearled flowers, or far off falling streams
Waking elusive echoes in the vale—
Still there the largess of Thy hand pours forth
To satisfy and gladden all that breathes.
Then who are these whose armies shake the world?
Who clutch the fateful lightnings in their hands,
To hurl them forth with ruin and red death
O'er desolated homes—the war lords, plumed
And helmeted, whose thunderous cannons lift
Their smoky banners high. Is, then, the earth
Their heritage, that they should seek to wrest
From poverty its scanty rood of ground,
Where patient toil still delves, or meekly waits
When Thou dost hoar-frost give like ashes? Lo!
Out of the tears and blood, the holocaust
Of crushed and bleeding squadrons, trampled crowns,
Wrecked empires and proud captains rolled in dust,
The long, hard lesson shall be learned at last—
"He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
And hath exalted them of low degree."

THE SOLE REQUEST

O GOD, I ask no other boon but this :
 To live, and let the quiet days go by,
 Feeling upon mine eyes the morning's kiss,
 Or breathing peace beneath an evening sky,
 While through the hours between, e'en love's least task
 Finds sweet fulfillment; nothing more I ask.

The strenuous service of the great and wise,
 And the slow recompense the world bestows,
 I seek not; only let me see the skies
 Flushed with the early sunlight, and the rose
 Pearled with the dew, and let me from the ground
 Catch with quick ear each fine, elusive sound.

For me it is enough to see the grass,
 And feel beneath my feet the springing sod;
 To breathe the vital air as seasons pass,
 And gain fleet glimpses of the skirts of God,
 There on the hills where first the mornings lie,
 Or on yon waters where the sunsets die.

HER NURSLING

TO thy great heart, O Nature, take thy child;
Close fold him in thy large, serene embrace;
Hide from the garish light his tired face;
Safe shelter him from storm-winds loud and wild.
Around him let thy hoary rocks be piled,
And sentinel trees guard well the quiet place
Where o'er him sunny shadows interlace,
And gentle violets breathe their perfume mild.
There let the birds at morn and evening sing;
There let the small stream chime its silver bells;
There let the wind its viewless censers swing,
And monk-like crickets chant in grassy cells.
O Nature, thy cool mantle o'er him fling,
And weave into his sleep thy sweetest spells.

AT THE SIGN OF THE HEART

*Here lies a heart, once love's own shrine, whence rolled
The smoke and flame of unconsumed desire;
The flames are perished now, the altar cold,
Yet ev'n its ashes hide a smouldering fire.*

THE WHISPERED WORD

O UNFORGOTTEN day, return!
Bring back thine opal skies,
And far-sown dews that wink and burn
Where morning's magic lies
On grassy slopes and meadows pied
With slender bluets starry-eyed.

For there, by waters slipping down
Past coverts cool and green,
'Mid birchen shoots and thickets brown,
With sunny isles between,
Sweeter than whitethroat's strain, I heard
The music of a whispered word.

And suddenly the world was bright
With bloom, and pulsing wings,
All blue and gold, flashed through the light,
While tender growing things,
From moist dim nook and leafy tent,
The fresh wild breath of spring outsent.

Still in the old loved haunt I dream;
Hushed are the ritournels
Of mating birds, and the choked stream
Muffles its silver bells;
Yet all my soul to song is stirred
By memory of that whispered word.

THE MASQUERADER

ABOVE her sunny head the netted boughs
Wove delicate arabesques; unfolding buds,
With faint elusive hints of vapory green,
Festooned the aisles; from every mossy bank
Shy violets peeped; and where pale ferns uncurled
Their silvery fronds amid the russet leaves,
A slender rill rang all its crystal bells,
Deliriously free. Returning birds
Twittered from swinging branches where she moved,
Her young lips tremulous with a little song
Fledged from her heart.

Then suddenly she saw
Before her one who tottered as he walked,
Oft pausing, while he leaned upon his staff,
To rest his feeble limbs. His wrinkled hands
With palsy shook, and from his wasted form
Loosely the garments hung in many a fold.
With pitying steps she hastened to his side;
"Poor man," she pleaded, "you are so infirm,
And I so young and strong, pray lean on me."
Whereat he turned and clasped her where she stood;
And she, all breathless with surprise and fright,
Lifting a moment her blanched face to his,
Beheld beneath a thatch of snow-white hair
Youth's shining locks, while on her own eyes beamed,
From out that frosty counterfeit of age,
The radiant, warm and mirth-brimmed eyes of love.

LOVE'S SORCERY

WHERESOEVER thou goest, Sweet,
Peace shall go before thy feet;
Forth shall gush the song of bird,
And the blossoms, faintly stirred,
Shall breathe incense, fine and rare,
On the love-enchanted air.
Round thy pathway, for thy sake,
From the ground a light shall break,
And thy footsteps shall be set
With the mint and violet.
Greener hills shall slope away
Where the mild-eyed cattle stray;
Fairer skies shall arch thee o'er
Than the world hath known before.
Not a fear shall shake thy heart;
Spent shall be Grief's venom'd dart
Ere it reach thee; thou shalt go
Where life's crystal fountains flow.
For a wizard wondrous wise,
Round thee weaves his sorceries,
And the earth shall changéd be
By his sovereign alchemy.
Thou to nature shalt be dear;
Subtlest music thou shalt hear
In the sounds of gurgling springs,
And the faery chime that rings

Where the grasses, cool and wet,
Screen the glimmering rivulet.
Thou shalt hear, o'er pleasant leas,
Slumberous murmurings of the bees,
And the grasshopper's shrill tune,
Through the long bright afternoon.
Night shall bring thee healing dew;
And the viewless hand that strews
Precious balm of Paradise
On the flowers' closéd eyes.
Shall with silken touches woo
Thee Sleep's rosy portals through.

Howsoe'er the seasons fleet,
Kindly stars shall o'er thee meet;
Love shall minister to thee,
And thy life shall charméd be.

VAE VICTIS

LONG sleeps Delilah; but at Gaza still
The shorn deluded Samsons sweat and grind
Amid the dust and clangor of the mill,
Treading their sordid round, forever blind.

GARDEN GHOSTS

TWO moon-white moths are fluttering
Athwart the haunted gloom;
I watch them waver, wing to wing,
Past many a spectral bloom.

No footfall wakes these mossy walks;
The mist's thin streamers trail,
From twisted shrubs and writhen stalks,
Round all the coppice pale.

Low winds amid the leaves complain;
The firefly's wizard spark
Makes mimic lightning when yon twain
Go wandering down the dark.

And still they flutter side by side,
As night's chill currents flow,
To that lone tryst-place where they died
Long centuries ago.

NOCTURNE

THE silver shallop of the moon
Is havened in the west;
The river trolls a ceaseless tune
About her place of rest.

Warm sleep hath sealed her gentle eyes,
And round her, vestal white,
Sweet dreams and wingéd fantasies
Are hovering all the night.

A wandering air, soft as a kiss,
And burdened with perfume,
Steals faint with its own stress of bliss
Into her virgin room.

Be this my wish: bright spirits keep
The current of her dreams,
And ever o'er her liliated sleep
The good stars shed their beams.

THE BRIDAL MORNING

O DEWY splendor of the morn,
Fall lightly on yon vine-wreathed pane;
Thou honey-gatherer, wind thy horn
To tell her day has come again.

The shadows of the night are fled;
The mists are lifted from the lawn;
From peak to peak a shaft is sped
Straight from the kindling heart of dawn.

O morning, on her sealéd eyes
Print the sweet magic of thy kiss;
Breathe softly on her where she lies,
And wake her to the nearing bliss.

A WOMAN

HER eyes are deeps of trustfulness; she waits
To open wide to love her heart's white gates,
And, like Alcestis, happy she to give
Her life, if so Admetus still may live.

HER VIOLIN

I WOULD I were her violin,
To rest beneath her dimpled chin,
To softly kiss her swan-white throat,
And breathe my love through every note.
When o'er my strings her fingers fair
Should lightly wander here and there,
The while her flashing bow did press
My bosom with its swift caress,
Then would I waken into song
The rapture that had slumbered long.
Mine ear against her swelling breast
Should hearken to its sweet unrest,
And—happy spy!—then should I know
How, deep beneath that drifted snow,
A blissful tumult in her heart
Made all her fluttering pulses start.
Then that high calm, that maiden grace,
That meekly proud and peerless face,
That aureole of sun-bright hair,
That brow such as the seraphs wear,—
No longer these should baffle quite
The anxious lover's dazzled sight.
Ah, would I were her violin,
That thus her secret I might win.

TO HER WATCH

OH happy watch, to lie in her bosom so,
Counting the hours in that delicious nest,
Hearing her gentle pulses ebb and flow,
Rocked by the motions of her dove-white breast—
Were I thy jewelled self a little space,
I scarce should heed how Time, the winged churl,
flies;
And when above me bent her radiant face,
I'd smile into the heaven of her eyes.

ABSENT

SHE comes not, though I tarry long;
The house is not the same;
And every echoing chamber speaks
Her dear familiar name.

She is not here, but many a mute
And fond remembrancer,
Like subtle odors, pure and fine,
Breathe memories of her.

MINE ADVERSARY

THOU mine adversary art,
Thou, love, that with ruthless dart
Didst so sorely wound my breast.
Lo! thou camest as a guest,
And as such I welcomed thee
To my hospitality.
My poor roof I bade thee share,
Bade thee taste my frugal fare—
Amber honey, wine and bread;
And when thou hadst supped, I led
Thee to my warm ingle-nook,
Cheering thee with song and book.
Thou my welcome didst betray;
Thou my kindness didst repay,
Caitiff-like with swift despite;
For, in silence of the night,
When the darkness was most deep,
And the world was hushed in sleep,
Thou didst rise to do me wrong;
Thou didst bind me fast and strong.
And while thus I helpless lay,
Thou didst steal my peace away,
Thou didst rob me of my joy,
Thou didst make my heart thy toy—
As a target for thy skill,
Thou didst pierce it at thy will;

And whene'er I prayed to thee,
Thou didst mock my misery.
Now I have escaped thy hands;
Sundered are thy silken bands;
Thou shalt never vex me more—
Lo! I spurn thee from my door.
Pass! henceforth I'll none of thee;
Let thy ways be far from me;
For howe'er the years may go,
Thou shalt be my dearest foe.

SUNDERED

I SHALL not touch her face, her hands again;
I shall not mingle her warm breath with mine;
I shall not drink again the nectared wine
Of her swift kisses, for dear Love is slain.
Yea, Love lies cold and dead; but pallid Pain,
Upon whose haggard cheeks the salt tears shine,
Hath set upon our brows her blood-red sign
Of hopeless anguish, like the mark of Cain.
Upon us Time hath wrought his change, for lo!
Not now we meet and pass as heretofore,
Each knowing that which none save us could know—
How full of love our hearts were to the core;
But now across life's wide waste fields we go
Our separate ways, to meet again no more.

ESTRANGED

THEY met, and all the world was fair;
Fair, too, were they as any pair
Of birds of paradise;
They met, and never meant to part,
But oh! time chills the warmest heart,
And dims the brightest eyes.

They met, and love betwixt them born,
From morn to dark, from dark to morn,
Walked with them through the land;
O, blithely sped the singing hours,
Till, lured to pluck the star-eyed flowers,
Each loosed the other's hand.

Then love took flight with sudden fright,
And now they wander through the night,
Blind with their helpless tears;
They grope amid the thorns and sand,
But cannot touch each other's hand
Through all the lonely years.

LOVE'S PARADOX

SHE would not stir a single jetty lash
To hear me praised; but when my life was
blamed
Her parian cheeks were kindled like a flash,
And from her heart a sudden love upflamed.

THE RECONCILIATION

(An Idyl of St. Martin's Summer)

PHYLLIS and I fell out one day,
Fell out as lovers do,
Yet why it was I could not say,
Nor do I think she knew.
Slow dragged the days down dreary ways;
Birds hushed their happy cries;
Till autumn touched to sudden blaze
The world with frosty dyes,
And in a glory, brief and bright,
Saint Martin's summer came,
Fringing the hills with purple light
And the shorn fields with flame.
Then once again we met; her face,
Her downcast, clouded eye,
Turned from me as with quickened pace
In silence she passed by.
Upon the path her swift feet spurned
A tiny glove of gray
Fell with a pleading palm upturned—
I saw it where it lay.
With wildly fluttering heart I spoke;
Her hurrying footsteps stayed,
While on her lips a smile awoke,
As sunshine scatters shade.
"Come, Phyllis," said I, "let us cease,
An age of joy we've missed";

Said she, "Well, I have wanted peace
This long time," and we kissed.
Now oft, as in my wife's dear eyes
I see fond whimsies blent,
That dropped glove stirs a vague surmise—
Was it an accident?

FLOWN

A GAIN in dreams thou comest to my side;
Again I hear thy voice, again I trace
The faultless features of thy sunny face—
Sweet eyes, pure brow, and dimpled cheeks where hide
The frolic sunbeams; once again the wide
Fair fields smile round us, and thy maiden grace
Makes sudden light in every dusky place
Where all day long the dewy shadows bide.
But thou hast flown—ah! whither hast thou flown?
What mortal soul thy dwelling-place may guess?
With empty arms, and hopes like dead leaves blown,
Wearily up time's flinty steep I press;
Yet, O my love, love's rugged way is known,
And I shall find thee crowned with blessedness.

HEAVEN NEAR

HOW very near my heaven lies!
Who seeks may find the place
Within the azure of her eyes,
The radiance of her face.

And of my perfect happiness,
How near the charmed land!
'Tis there where goes her whispering dress,
Where glimmers her white hand.

PARTING

LOVE, are our lives so long that we may part
For months and years, nor feel a pang of grief?
Or is the measure of the days so brief
That, as they go, they leave no bitter smart
To trace its dreary record on the heart?
O, unto thee is not the fallen leaf,
The withered landscape, and the rustling sheaf,
Presageful of a time when we must start
Upon a longer journey, nevermore
To come again and clasp each other's hand,
And look with love into each other's eyes?
Lo! here we may not tarry long, for o'er
Our sight a vapor gathers, and the land
Lies wrapped in gloom descending from the skies.

THE FIRST TRYST

WITHIN the whispering shadows of the night,
Where the gray dunes show wan against the sky,
And the long roller curls its yellow foam
Above half-strangled sands, he stands at gaze.
His heart is sick with doubt, and painfully
His ear is bent to catch the hushed sweet noise
Of light feet hastening towards him; sudden fears
Clutch at his throat, and fancy, chilled and weak,
Plagues him with nameless pangs; there in the dark
One big star burns like an unwinking eye,
Mocking his vigil; somewhere, far away,
A dog bays maddeningly, and all his soul
Hangs on the torture of that instant when
From the dim tower the bell's first note shall boom
Its brazen signal; hollow winds arise,
Mingled of flame and frost; hope flickers low,
As falls the breathless moment; till at last
The long-awaited stroke which, ere it dies,
Shudders into a little sound of joy.
Then outstretched hands that glimmer through the
dusk,
Pale robes that flutter near, a happy cry
Quenched in a tremulous sob—and all is well.

THE PRESENT

WHAT matter we have suffered, dear, and borne
A thousand pangs, when we are lying low?
What matter that we drank the lees of scorn,
And wept beneath our griefs, as we weep now,
When from our dust shall spring the matted thorn?

What matter, dear, that you and I have kept
Hearts sweet and tender through ungracious years,
When in the sepulcher we shall have slept
A thousand moons, and dried are Memory's tears,
And Love sings by the tomb where once he wept?

I know when we are gone the flowers will bloom,
And in their seasons leaves will go and come,
And nesting birds will sing above our tomb;
But still, what matter? We shall both be dumb,
And locked in silence and eternal gloom.

What matter, dear, though spring and summer wane,
And winter come with chilling sleet and snow,
Or on our graves the flowers weep in rain,
Or on our graves the flowers forget to blow,
What matter, dear?—we cannot then feel pain.

Should others love as you and I have loved,
What matter?—we shall mingle hearts in dust:.

Should others prove, as you and I have proved,
The faith of men, nor forfeit Heaven's high trust,
What matter?—they shall move as we have moved.

Come, come away! O, now we will not mourn,
For that which is not; and the past is past;
Though faded joys shall nevermore return,
Neither shall faded griefs, the first or last,
And time's true heir is of the present born.

O love, what may be shall not cloud the heart,
Nor steal joy from the present, which is ours;
Now, *now* we'll clasp, and laugh at death, nor part,
But make these, which we have, most golden hours,
And when the Dread Voice calls, together start.

NEW LIFE, NEW LOVE

AH, what awaits us when the glimmering sight
Is slowly quenched within the gathering night;
When on the hills the purple shadows fall,
And lingering darkness hides and covers all—
New life, new love?

Could new life sweeter than the old life be?
Hath love for us some rarer ecstasy?
Ah! while the day shines and it grows not late,
Say not there dwell beyond the night's dark gate
New life, new love.

THE OLD STORY

THROUGH tangled grass the rill sobbed by,
We saw eve's red sun glow;
The peaceful herds were browsing nigh,
The village slept below.

A trailing ivy, like a wreath,
Drooped down upon her hair,
And she who, blushing, stood beneath
Knew she was very fair.

The pomp of the declining day,
The beauty of the place,
Around us like a halo lay,
And shone upon her face.

We lingered there with many a sigh,
And many a whispered vow;
I saw the tear steal from her eye,
I saw her clouded brow.

Afar we heard the minster bell;
Slowly the day went out;
Then, as the twilight round us fell,
I told her all my doubt.

Like sunshine shot through April skies,
Her smile flashed through her tears,
And while I dried her beauteous eyes,
She kissed away my fears.

O fickle tears! O faithless vows!
O fond, delusive trust!
Love weeping goes with hidden brows,
And wings low in the dust.

FOR THINE OWN SAKE

WITHIN thy voice I hear another voice,
Not sweeter than thine own; and thy dear eyes
Are tender as the shadows that rejoice
The hushed, glad world when evening dusks the
skies.

The touch of thy white hand awakes in me
The ancient thrill; and that warm clasp of thine
Is sweeter far than the chill memory
Of fingers ne'er responsive unto mine.

For thine own sake, and not another's, I
Find music in thy presence; and I feel,
When to thy gentle spirit I draw nigh,
A sense of infinite beauty o'er me steal.

And on the hunger of my heart there fall
Soft comfortings; and, whatsoe'er be past,
When to thy soul my own fond soul shall call,
Thou too shalt speak and I shall hold thee fast.

EXPECTANCY

THE DAWN

NOW moves the night before me, and the mist
Slips from the valley, by the south-wind kissed.

THE MEADOW

Soon will her light feet o'er my bosom pass,
And daisies star her foot-prints in the grass.

THE BROOK

And I shall see her smile, as her sweet face
Lingers above me for a little space.

THE BIRD

My blithest notes I'll flute into her ear,
And her dear spirit shall lean out to hear.

THE ROSE

My petals she shall touch with her soft lips,
While maiden joy thrills to her finger tips.

THE LOVER

O Love, I wait and watch the new day break;
The dews are drying, and the winds awake;
Thou art my morning; let thy sovran light
Strike on my soul and scatter all my night.

THE CAPTIVE

WHITHER fare you, Dimple-cheek,
Sad and slow?
Why that pale and pensive face
As you go?
In your downcast, wistful eyes
Half-concealed a shadow lies;—
Clouds are in the gusty skies,
Trailing low.

Leaves are fallen, flowers are dead;
Now the day
Clean forgets the smiles it wore
When 'twas May;
Why then should your lingering feet
Pass where frost and flowers meet?
Not a bird-song ripples, Sweet,
Down the way.

Ah! 'twas here the gin was set;
Here the dart
Pierced thee—here the snare was spread
By love's art.
Like a bird that cannot sing,
While it trails a broken wing,—
Bruiséd, fluttering, captive thing,—
Droops your heart.

And it throbs, and will not rest;
 Throbs in vain;
And you come with aching breast,
 Come again
Where love's honeyed words were said,
When the sky was blue o'erhead;—
Ah, the moments that are fled!
 Ah, the pain!

But. O summer's darling, wait;
 What though now
Birds are mute, and madcap winds
 Strip each bough?
Hastes this way the budding year
When, despite each darkling fear,
Hope shall place her chrism, Dear,
 On your brow.

I WOULD MY SONG WERE LIKE A STAR

I WOULD my song were like a star
Hung in the purple depths afar,
To lead her eyes, through gates of even,
Along the kindling paths of heaven.

I would my song were like a rose
From whose sweet heart the perfume flows;
Then on her bosom it might lie,
And, breathing fragrant music, die.

CUPID'S ARROWS

PHEBE, wandering in a wood,
Chanced to spy Dan Cupid sleeping;
Long the curious maiden stood
Tiptoe through the branches peeping.
For the youngster's lips she yearned,
Till, the branches parting slyly,
She to slake her thirst that burned
Stooped and kissed the rogue's mouth shyly.

Now the boy's eyes open wide,
And upon the maid he gazes,
Grasps an arrow at his side,
And his silver bow upraises.
Swift the maiden turns to flee;
Swift the arrow follows after,
Wounding in its flight a tree;
Hark! how rings the maid's clear laughter.

Cupid, with sleep-dazzled eyes,
Stares a moment through the bushes
Where the laughing maid still flies,
Then adown the wood he rushes.
Now the shaft o'ertakes the quarry,
Now it cleaves poor Phebe's heart:
Maidens, ere you wake Love, tarry
First to filch his every dart.

ROSALIND'S SONG

(In the Forest of Arden)

O LET the sweet winds blow,
And let the clear sun shine,
For all the world shall know
That he is mine.

It is not shame to see
The leaf upon the vine;
Why should it shameful be
To own him mine?

The light that loves the flower,
I take it for a sign;—
Love is a maiden's dower,
And he is mine.

Sweet wind, true leaf, fair light,
And joy that shall not tine,
I know love's sovran might,
For he is mine.

A PROPHECY

NO seer am I, and yet I know full well,
When o'er my book thine eyes pore, misty-dim,
To thine own heart this secret thou shalt tell:
"This friend loved me, and I—I, too, loved him."

THE VICTORY

AS townward mistress Betty goes
With tossing head and haughty lips,
And dainty, outward-pointing toes
That spurn the path o'er which she trips,
She recks not how yon sleek young blades
Begin to ogle, smirk and purr,
Nor yet how all the kerchiefed maids
Are whispering after her.

As Betty goes she walks alone,
Her gathered kirtle in her hand;
She curtsies not to any one,
She sees no smiles, however bland;
Her bosom, veiled by silken braids,
Is sweet as hills that drop with myrrh,
While still the sly and tittering maids
Stand gazing after her.

Ah, Betty goes to meet her fate!
Bold Roger lurks by yonder stile;
She spies him, but alas! too late;
With him avails no scornful wile.
Now all her helpless pride he raids,
And traitor longings in her stir,
While o'er their shoulders men and maids
Make merry after her.

SEAWARD

O LOVE, our brows are toward the open sea;
Our eyes look onward to the nearing strand;
The salt winds on our cheeks blow fresheningly,
And strange sea-voices haunt the reedy land.

I know not where thy footsteps fall, nor yet
What skies o'erarch thee, but I know full well
That thy face, like my own, is seaward set,
Drawn thither by the same resistless spell.

We shall not fail to stand beside the deep,
And though our feet may falter as we go,
Still one unerring course we ever keep
Toward that long level where the sea-tides flow.

The evening shades are gathering cool and sweet;
The moving waste awaits us; O my bride
That never wast, set sail; our hands shall meet
When we make harbor on the other side.

LOVE IS DEAD

NOW Love is dead;
Fold close each filmy van;
Twine round his fallen head
White roses ere their leaves be shed.
The winds alone shall fan
The clustering locks back from his pallid brow;
A touch of fingers howe'er light
Were all too heavy on those temples white
And waxen cheeks.
Now let his grave be made
There where the laurel's shade
Dusks the small brook that seeks
To quench its sobs mid trailing grasses green.
Dear Love! How glad his eyes,
In the old days when under kinder skies,
Mid flowers with bursting buds between
And butterflies afloat,
He shook his dewy throat
And sang for very joy
Of life, poor boy!
Now he is dead;
The year is fled
Beyond recall,
And where the blossoms all

O'erhung his happy bower, birds are mute,
And wandering breezes flute
A melancholy strain.
Bury him out of sight,
Bury him from the light,
Alike from joy and pain,
From sun and rain.
There is not one to weep
That he is gone, so let his grave be deep,
And nothing more be said,
For Love is dead.

CANTICLE

SOFT as the dew that falls by night
Beneath the moon's entranced light
Upon my thirsty heart love fell;
Love slakes my drouth, and all is well.

No claustral lily lifteth up
More eagerly her virgin cup,
To quaff the balm-draught from above,
Than I my heart to drink of love.

Now all my days are dream-enwreathed
And perfume on my dark is breathed;
Joy's buds within my bosom swell;
Sing, O my heart, for all is well.

THE REFLUENT WAVE

I

DAILY we dwell beneath the self-same roof;
Our unaverted eyes meet as of yore;
In small fair household courtesies, as before,
Our self-forgetfulness is put to proof;
We tread a common path, nor hold aloof
From the old scenes which erstwhile wreathed our
door
With Eden's early grace, yet more and more
Our woven lives are severed, warp and woof.

Not now, as once, a simple flower imparts
Its tender tale to our united souls;
Our hands clasp, but no answering gladness starts
Wave-like from zones where love's deep ocean rolls;
We speak, we smile, we mingle, yet our hearts
Are sundered each from each wide as the poles.

II

Still—still—who knows? a touch, a tear, a sigh,
A sweet remembered word, some sudden way
Of speech, awaking memories of a day
When earth laughed forth in bloom, and all the sky
Grew opulent with love's own vermeil dye,—
Who knows but one of these, like magic, may
Restore the glory, and the rapturous sway,
Within the heart, of hair and lip and eye?

Echoes that haunt the silence of the past,
Visions of joy that keep a vigil vain,
Fond ghosts that wander in the rayless, vast,
Unhallowed night with empty cries of pain,—
Who knows but these may all prevail at last,
And love's receding wave rush back again?

THE VEILED DESTINY

THE dark had not yet come, but day was fallen
Among the ruddy embers of the west;
Sweetly the dew was gathering on the flowers,
And late bees, heavy-laden, homeward turned.
Somewhere, far off, amid the dusky fields,
One solitary bird above its nest
Uttered its little cry of anxious joy.
In mine your hand lay, like a snowflake chill,
And in the shadow of your eyes I read
Our mutual doom. No whispered word availed.
A single star, amid the curtaining clouds,
Peered out and twinkled coldly. And our lips
Met once, not with a swift touch full of fire,
But passionless, as ashes lay between.....
Then from my empty life your presence passed
Forever, while upon the insensate world
The stark night closed, and Hope lay newly dead.

THE DIVIDING OF THE WAYS

O ANGUISH of parting!—here swerve the ways,
This path to the right, and that to the left;
We are come at length to our day of days,
To our moment of moments, and are bereft.
Even so—I will hold your hand for a space,
Look once again in your truth-clear eyes,
Read over the lines of your patient face,
That my soul may yet hold you picture-wise.

Shall we say it is best that it should be so?
Were Fate not loth, and had we met
While the hills were washed with the morning-glow,
And all the valleys with balm were wet,
We had found our life, then, you and I,
Laid hands on the full warm pulse of the years,
Had drained the chalice of blessings dry,
Nor e'er set lip to this cruse of tears.

Still, who shall deny that this bitter hour,
As a blind seed sown in the womb of Time,
May bear not yet its consummate flower
In another sphere and another clime?
Who knows that our loss is not rarer gain?
That ever like fools we choose the less?
That the core of joy is swathed in pain,
And peace in uttermost weariness?

The sun drops low, and the twilight falls;
The mist hangs over the moaning burn
Like a frosty breath; 'a late bird calls,
And above the wood the young stars yearn.
Must it be farewell?—yea, it must be so,
And we shall fare well, despite grief's threat,
For still, wherever our feet may go,
Our brows towards the self-same goal are set.

WIZARDRY

DEW in the heart of the rose—
Spirit of lambent fire—
Breath of the wind that blows—
Voice of the Spring's desire—
Soul of the song that thrills
With rapture through earth and sea—
Light of the dawn on the darkling hills—
Such is my love to me.

Blithe are her feet that fall,
Quickening the tender grass—
Sweet are her lips that call
As the music of streams that pass;
The sum of the world's delight
In all fair things that be—
Star of the mariner's longing sight—
Such is my love to me.

THE JESTER

THEY rode together down the claustral aisles
Of the dim woodland. From the cool retreats
And leafy privacies the mated birds
Ruffled their throats in song. High overhead
The sun coursed a diaphanous sky, and sent
Through swaying boughs his javelins of gold.
A slender stream rang all its crystal bells
'Twixt banks of moss and fern beside the way
Whither they passed unheeding. The sleek steeds
Set noiseless hoofs on mast and russet leaves,
The last year's fallen glory. Each was young,
And she was very fair. His arm was zoned
About her; the twin roses in her cheeks
Flamed as she drooped against him, her bright hair
Flowed o'er his shoulder, and her dancing plumes
Swept his bronzed cheek.

Then were they ware of one
Who, bowed and tattered, in the shadow stood
Leaning upon a staff. His sightless eyes
Were bent upon the twain, a flickering hand
Was out-thrust towards them, while across his breast,
Stained with unseasonable rains and dews,
The legend ran, "Sweet folk, alms for the blind."
With little sounds of pity they drew rein,

Upon the pleading palm a coin was laid,
And conscience-free they pricked along their path;
Till suddenly, from behind, a peal of mirth
Caught them as with a buffet, and they turned:
Then from his face the beggar plucked a mask,
His ragged garments from his body slipt,
And they beheld the dazzling wings of Love.

A HAUNTED HEART

(Vale, vale, in æternum vale)

OUR ways diverge; we shall not meet again;
But that old season, gone beyond recall,
Shall never quite pass from your life, nor all
Forgotten be its pleasures and its pain.
Hushed is the music of the summer rain
Among the flowers; no more the lilies tall
Flame in the garden where for us the small
Vine-cloistered minstrel warbled his refrain.

The last word has been spoken and we part;
Vanished the dream which was too bright to stay;
Hate from her quiver draws a final dart
Full-fledged with scorn and deadly will to slay.
Farewell! the hollow chambers of your heart
Shall know henceforth the ghost of a dead day.

THE BLIND ARCHER

BEAUTIES, guess ye where he bides?
In some flowery hedge he hides,
Folding close each filmy van;
From his mother's side he ran,
Wanton, wilful, naked, blind;
If the boy ye chance to find,
Fly the spot or yet his dart
Quivers in your stricken heart.
Evermore he bends his ear,
Listening for a footstep near,
Lurking till some hapless maid
Nigh his rosy lair hath strayed;
To the cord a wingéd shaft
Sets he then with cruel craft;
Hark ye! sightless though he is,
Rarely doth this archer miss.

TO——

DEAREST, we have wrought together
Through the wasting years,
In serene and troubled weather,
Mocked of hopes and fears;
Now beyond Time's lessening tether,
Lo, the end appears.

While the certain dusk advances,
Nestle at my side;
Sunset kindles in thy glances,
O my faithful bride;
Eve thy fairness but enhances,
Past youth's rosy pride.

So our courage shall not alter
With the changing light,
Nor our onward footsteps falter
Toward the coming night;
Still our hearts con love's sweet psalter,
And the way is bright.

THE LATE COMER

BE glad that love hath come to thee and me,
Belovéd, tardy comer though he is;
Dearer to me this rare autumnal bliss
Than all the Spring's precarious grace could be.
What were life's triumphs, never more to see
Love's splendor burn in other eyes—to miss
The rapturous wonder when love's first warm kiss
Dews the soft lips surrendered trustingly.
Dear, in deep shadows I so long have lain
That I am avid of the smallest ray
Foretelling love's great glory dawns again
To bless my life, ere evening, chill and gray,
Quenches the vital spark in heart and brain;
O star of hope, lead in the fuller day!

LOVE GIVES ITS ALL

LOVE gives its all nor counts the price,
Happy that thus it still may show
In an unmeasured sacrifice
Its precious overflow.

Where eyes are dimmed with lonely tears,
Where hearts are bowed with grief and care,
Where weakness walks 'mid gloom and fears—
Love sheds its healing there.

Love's hands are strong to lift and save;
Down pain's dark ways Love goes afar;
Love's beacon shines athwart the grave,
And kindles like a star.

Love scales the height and probes the deep,
And when death's shadow o'er us lies,
Love's mighty pinions upward sweep
To bear us to the skies.

HER RETURNING

THROUGH the long hours I dreamed of pain;
Within my heavy ears
My pulses thundered, and my brain
Was sick with nameless fears.

Then suddenly the morning broke;
The desolate night was o'er;
And lo! I saw thee, as I woke,
Stand smiling at the door.

SOMETIME—SOMEWHERE

SOMETIME, sometime—ah, let not hope abate
Her vestal flame—when past the cloudy night,
My soul shall stand revealed in clearer light,
Wilt thou not set ajar thy heart's closed gate?
No storm-tossed bird e'er sought its nested mate,
All spent and weary from its anxious flight,
More eagerly than I, through drouth and blight,
Toil towards love's shrine, withdrawn, inviolate.
Some guerdon somewhere surely there must be,
Some cool oasis in the desert sands,
Some peaceful haven past the homeless sea,
For the worn pilgrim from unsmiling lands;—
O thou where Elim's palms and fountains be,
To thee I lift faint eyes and suppliant hands.

AT SHUT OF DAY

NOT now, not now, not of this veiled sun
Nor tenuous shade, our tremulous love was born,
But when the sheer night feathered toward the morn,
And the faint stars, like tapers, one by one,
Died in the dawn, and the chill night was done.
'Twas when the light wind o'er the breathing corn
Winnowed his vans, and from each gossamer'd thorn
Billowed the dew-pearled gonfalons day had won.
Then had our love its birth—a fluttering thing,
That scarce knew if the fire-fledged morn had come,
Or if to swell its moon-white throat and sing,
Or bid, 'mid twilight leaves, its voice be dumb.
But now day wanes—Dear, doth desire take wing?
Doth the grasshopper e'en grow burdensome?

HIS CONFESSION

WHAT boots it to give me your hand?
No thrill do I feel;
True, once it was otherwise—see, o'er the land
The long shadows steal.

Ay, once a soft pair of dark eyes
Could trouble my rest;
Could wake song or sorrow—behold, the light dies
From out the dim west.

I loved you ; I own it was so ;
But all that is dead ;
So come, we are lingering late, let us go—
The twilight has fled.

HER COMING

LIGHT on the hilltops, dew on the clover ;
Dawn, and a song in the air ;
Gold of the buttercups half the world over,
And gold in the sheen of her hair ;
She's coming, she's coming, her footsteps are shaking
The gossamer spun from the thorn ;
She's coming, O heart, and the flowers are waking ;
She's coming and bringing the morn.

Splendor on far peaks, dusk in the valleys ;
O wonder and joy of the day !
Mid opaline shadows the brooklet outsallies ;
The nest is a-swing on the spray ;
She's coming, she's coming, her sandals are gleaming
Along the waste places of night ;
She's coming to waken my soul from its dreaming
And drench the new world with delight.

RECOGNITION

THOUGH I shall find thee robed in white,
And on thy brow, pure and serene,
A beauty more divinely bright
Than earth hath ever seen;

And though I dumbly strive to trace
The sweet, worn human lines again
Within thy changed, seraphic face,
But strive, alas! in vain;

Thy voice shall wake the ancient thrill,
And through thy radiant disguise
I shall behold the old love still
Deep burning in thine eyes.

THE ANSWER

WHY do I love thee?—ask, when night is done,
Why morning dawns; ask any flower that blows,
Why from its dewy heart the perfume flows
When zephyrs woo; ask why the gossamers, spun
By faery hands ere moonlit hours are run,
Shake all their threaded tears if but the rose
Stir in its dreams; ask why green buds uncloset
Their tender bosoms to the quickening sun.

Ah, who shall fathom life's old mysteries,
Or read the ancient riddle of the heart?
But this I know—whene'er thy gentle eyes
Look into mine, along my pulses start
Strange melodies, and I see thy soul that lies,
Virgin and white, in its own place apart.

THE FLEDGELING

DEAR, in the secret, sheltered nest
Still let love's timid fledgeling lie,
While softly in the violet west
The vernal sunsets die.

For, haply, on some golden morn,
When shadows ripple o'er the wheat,
And midges wind an elfin horn,
And summer airs blow sweet,

Its throat shall thrill with ecstasy,
Whilst thou, 'mid screenings leaves apart,
Shalt hear in that wild minstrelsy
Echoes of thine own heart.

VALE

LET us forget, my heart, let us forget
That old sweet day when summer skies were blue,
And that one hour, caught in noon's golden net,
When all the world seemed kind, and love was new.

Now other skies are o'er us; love, denied,
Casts one sad, backward glance to that drear place
Where Faith, grown weary, fainted, and Hope died,
Hiding in dust her unregarded face.

LOVE'S RENASCENCE

DEAR LOVE, I love you as the flowers the dew,
As the parched desert loves the healing rain,
As tear-worn eyes soft slumber after pain,
As winter-prisoned buds the vernal blue.
My soul's deep tides all move and meet in you;
The slackened lute-strings that so long have lain
Unswapt, forgotten, dumb, now wake again
To thrill with ecstasies which once they knew.
For you to me are life and warmth and sun;
The naked boughs with bloom are clothed once more;
Like pearls, love's dear bestowments, one by one,
I hoard away within my heart, a store
Of treasured sweets where treasure there was none,
And all my world grows opulent as of yore.

DIVIDED

A LITTLE while, ah, yet a little while
As Time's swift shuttle plies, and I shall be
With thee at last but a wan memory,
Too dim and fugitive for tear or smile.
But I shall see thee in the woodland aisle,
In the white clouds piled o'er the heaving sea,
In the far mountain's blue immensity,
In sun-scorched city streets spread mile on mile.
But haply, sometime, mid night's shadowy gleams,
Across uncharted leagues, from unknown lands,
Though 'twixt us roll the tides of countless streams,
And like an ocean stretch the desert sands,
Thou shalt behold me in unwilling dreams,
With eyes of sorrow and beseeching hands.

VALLEY-BORN

"For love is of the valley"

L OVE in the darkened valley keeps the hearth-fire
bright,
Where the vine-grown latticed cottage nestles beside
the lane;
'Mid gathering mists and shadows her lamp gleams
through the night,
And gentle eyes watch hour by hour behind the wink-
ing pane.

Love in the watered valley prepares her simple board,
Laden with oaten cakes and honey amber-clear,
And haply a cruse of wine from autumn's vintage
poured,

When the oozing vats dripped nectar in the harvest
of the year.

Love in the quiet valley frets not for soaring wings;
Hers are the vision and dream mid life's small homely
tasks;

A lullaby crooned in the twilight, a cradle that lightly
swings,

And a homeward-faring footstep—ah! nothing more
she asks.

Love in the verdant valley plights happy troth, nor seeks
To stanch on the arid heights the ache of a lonely
life;

She mounts no perilous paths towards the barren, home-
less peaks,

Where warm breasts hover no dear brood, nor glad
lips whisper "wife."

O BREATH OF THE GOLDEN DAY

O BREATH of the golden day, blow free;
Blow out of the opal west;
Blow thou a token or sign to me,
To hush my heart's unrest;
O Bring from the far-off sunset sea
Some message of love confest.

O breath of the dawn-lit dusk, I wait;
Blow down from the hills of myrrh;
The bird now wakens his nested mate;
The dreaming roseleaves stir;
O haste, for the weary night grows late;
Bring one dear word from her.

A SLEEP AND A DREAM

"La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le reve"

Is life but a slumber, and love but a dreaming?
Ah soul, should this prove to be true,
Then nothing were real, all things were but seeming
And you were a dream, dearest, too,
Ay, you
Were naught but a dream, dearest, too.

But, ah, though a dream, from the regions Elysian
On radiant wings thou dost sweep;

So, if life be but slumber, and love but a vision,
May Heaven ne'er wake me from sleep,
But keep
Me still the blest captive of sleep.

FULFILLMENT

SOMEWHERE beyond the mete of time,
And the last morrow's ken,
Where morn shall blaze, as in its prime,
Ere seen by eyes of men—

Where spirit from the bond of flesh
Shall be forever free,
Our happy feet shall walk the fresh
Sweet ways of mystery.

We twain shall wander hand in hand,
Where suns and planets cease,
And in that Presence come to stand
Whose perfect name is Peace.

And there, upon that utmost height,
Down which strange splendors pour,
Our souls shall mingle in the light—
One, one forevermore.

And I shall fold thee to my side,
And thou at length shalt know
The love I bore thee, O my bride,
In the dim long ago.

And thou in thy white loveliness,
And I released from strife,
Shall learn how, out of storm and stress
Is won the gift of life.

AT SUNSET

LOVE came across the meadows
At the dawning of the day;
Before him fled the shadows,
Past the mountains, far away;
Love came, a dear, unbidden guest;
The mated bird sang by its nest;
While morning caroled in my breast,
And Oh, the joy of living!

Love came across the meadows
At the dawning of the day,
But left me in the shadows
When night fell, cold and gray;
He fled, the false and fickle guest;
The bird drooped by the empty nest;
The evening chilled my lonely breast,
And Oh, the woe of living!

UNFORGOTTEN

O LOST one, though the long years still divide
Our onward paths, we ne'er shall wholly part,
For vestal Memory, at her altar-side,
Shall feed the sacred flame within my heart.

And all fair things that come to me the while—
The flush of dawn, the twilight-damasked skies—
Bring back again the sunlight of your smile,
The deathless wonder of your star-like eyes.

Yet, sometimes, when the night is on the land,
And barren fields with wintry rains are wet,
I hunger for the warm touch of your hand,
And all my soul awakes to wild regret.

THE VERNAL CALL

COME, dearest, it is time to go,
The crimson buds are calling;
The south-wind whispers sweet and low;
The slender streams are falling
From slope to slope with bells of foam
Upon their dimpled bosoms,
And twinkling feet already roam
Amid the springing blossoms.

Come, dearest, for the vernal breath
Within our hearts is waking;
Loosed are the frigid bands of death;
The year's young day is breaking.
The happy birds from bough to bough
To find their mates are winging;
O love, our springtime, too, is now,
And youth returns with singing.

DISINHERITED

I BUILT my life in thee; in that dear nest
Hope carolled o'er her fledgelings day by day,
Bodeless of hours when they should fly away,
And leave bereaved and lorn her gentle breast.
My sunlight was thy smile, and I was blest;
Till round the rose-strewn path where I did stray
Gathered unhallowed vapors, chill and gray,
And ominous clouds frowned from the darkened west.
But now I know not, oh! I know not, where
The wild fresh beauty of our morn hath fled;
The world, grown agéd, is no longer fair;
The dewless petals of the rose are shed;
Love lies discrowned and dumb—he that was heir
Of all our dreams—and dust is on his head.

ALL BEAUTEIOUS THINGS

ALL beauteous things meet in the wondrous deep
Of her dark eyes—cool dawns and orange eves,
And flutterings of green wind-lifted leaves
On noon-tide slopes where summer lies asleep;
There, mirrored, are the streams that downward leap
To die in mist; and there the dream that weaves
Its midnight spell about her and retrieves
Her spirit from the cares day hath in keep.
Plead for me, O my verse, breathe all my love
Into her heart—dear heart that I would fain
Shelter against my own; and I would prove,
Through all the years to be, that not in vain
To crown her life with blessedness I strove,
Or sought to shield her gentle soul from pain.

HER LOVELINESS

HER loveliness makes music in my soul;—
A lily in the dew; a rose at morn
When the wind ripples o'er the golden corn;
Streams that between the dappled meadows roll
Their shining length; bells that at evening toll
Their silver vespers; bees that wind their horn
Through noonday quests; and, when the stars are born,
Late birds swift winging towards their nested goal—

All these wake not within my prescient heart
So much of joy as when, her gentle eyes
Upraised to mine making my pulses start,
I filch from their pure deeps some sweet surprise,
And of all beauty feel that she is part—
Beauty of night and dawn, of earth and skies.

THE PARADOX

AH, had I know the sorrow and unrest,
The wild desires and vain imaginings,
The wished-for good no morrow ever brings,
The days of dolor and the nights unblest;
Yea, had I known how from my life the zest
Should vanish as the dwindled water-springs;
How hope, grown hopeless, with dishevelled wings
Low trailing, should surcease her futile quest—
I would have loved thee still, because I must;
For in thy voice I hear the prescient call
Of homing birds borne down the wintry gust,
With breath of hyacinthine buds, and all
The music of clear streams, while ev'n the dust
Breaks into bloom where'er thy light feet fall.

LOVE AND BEAUTY

I FOLLOW Love, and Beauty twin to Love,
Beauty so beautiful and Love so sweet;
They smile and beckon to me where they move,
Yet e'er elude my clogged and stumbling feet.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

MORE life, more love! O buds that swell in
spring,
And riotous birds that through the orchards wing,
And sweet small violets in the hollows lone,
And vernal breaths o'er crinkling waters blown,
And federate trees with mounting sap tides rife,
Ye plead one wild desire: "More life, more life!"

More life, more love! Ah, little lyric throats,
And sun-bright leaves, deep grass, and glancing motes,
And pastoral bees at day-long sylvan tasks,
And pungent herb that in the midnight basks,
And household vines that screen the nesting dove,
Ye lift one poignant cry: "More love, more love!"

ALTAR STAIRS

*Not they are blest who greet the morning's sun,
Nor they on whom the sultry noontide glows,
But blest are they, life's labors being done,
Whom evening calls unto its dusk repose.*

THE ANCHORITE

HERE in the desert where the very thorn
Is dwarfed and shrivelled with the sun's excess—
Where the gray rocks are flushed beneath the morn,
And night wraps round their uncouth nakedness
Her star-lit shadows—still I watch and pray,
While the slow hours uncounted creep away.

Oft with the knotted scourge my rebel flesh
I chasten in the importunate solitude;
Upon my brow the wind breathes sweet and fresh,
Above the earth the palpitant heavens brood;
But still I turn to that dark realm within,
In agony to wrestle with my sin.

The vast plain pulsates in the withering heat
Which rolls athwart the waste sands, wave on wave;
Along the barren ridge its billows beat
About the doorway of my narrow cave;
While I, with bruised knees and aching eyes,
Besiege with prayer the unresponsive skies.

On bitter herbs I break my bootless fast,
And at the brackish pool I stanch my thirst;
I hear old voices from the ghostly past,
I groan, and weep, and am as one accurst;
All night my truss of straw is drenched with tears;
My spirit faints; I am consumed with fears.

O wherewith shall I gird me for my task,
Or my perfidious pride of life abase?
When from my soul I tear its guilty mask,
And low in dust hide my unhallowed face,
E'en then I hear soft whispers from above,
While round me hover dreams of human love.

THE SECRET MINISTRIES

CHILD of My love, I know thy bitter care,
And that thy weary heart is like to break
Betimes, as o'er life's worn and dusty ways
From day to day thou bearest thy huge load:
I laid it on thee and I know thy strength;
Stern is thy trial, but no feather's weight
Beyond its limit shall thy sorrow press.
Nor shalt thou faint, for I will gather thee
Within Mine arm's sufficient comforting,
And breathe a holy courage through thy fears,
Never will I forsake thee, but will bless
With secret ministries, until thy bonds
Are loosed, and the old burden from thee slips,
At the bright portals of thy Father's house.

A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS

THIS house, so slowly builded up
Through seasons dashed with sun and rain;
This heart that holds as in a cup
Life's little pleasures mixt with pain;
These hands that fumble at their task,
Or nerveless fall from labors done;
This face that hides me like a mask;
These feet that age clogs as they run—
All these shall pass and be no more,
And that which grew through strenuous days
Shall like a troubled dream be o'er,
Nor know again Time's clouded ways.
But somehow, somewhere, from the night,
And from the dust, shall surely rise
That which eludes the grosser sight,
To seek its home beyond the skies.

HOMEWARD

I TREAD the path; the end thereof
I cannot see; but thou, my Guide,
Hast taught me that thy name is Love,
So evermore at thy dear side
I walk content; and though my feet
Are sometimes weary, and my eyes
Strain through the dark, I find it sweet,
Knowing the pathway homeward lies.

AS A LITTLE CHILD

TO feel the freshness of the opening year;
The joy of swelling buds and springing grass;
To see the flame-like crocus lift its spear;
To trace God's footsteps shining where they pass;

To know that heaven is never far away,
Nor lose the open vision of the soul;
To walk 'mid common wonders day by day,
And read the cryptic signs on nature's scroll;

To watch the lyric seasons come and go;
The flickering leaf, the fern's uncurling fronds;
The delicate star-shaped crystals of the snow;
The crinkling stream, the osier's slender wands;

The yellow bee with pollen-dusted thighs;
The lily with the dewdrop in its breast;
The nascent splendor of the morning skies;
The evening purpling in the solemn west;

Yea, still to find the old world sweet and fair,
To move 'mid ancient evils undefiled,
With eye unjaundiced by deceit and care,
Keep me, O Father, as a little child.

WEARY

WHY cry aloud? Why lift a strenuous voice?
Better is quiet; better that rapt hour
When thou canst feel the large cool night rejoice,
And truth speaks to thee from the dew-lipped flower.

Rest and be still; wrapped softly round thy heart,
Let the sweet silence heal thee like a balm;
Forget the praise; thine is the better part,
And heaven shall send its whispers through thy calm.

The world may shout its triumphs from afar,
Care not; commune apart with thine own soul;
Safe from the strife of tongues, the noise of war,
Let peace like tides of music round thee roll.

WASTED

METHOUGHT 'twere time enough, when the rather
dews
Dried from the herbs, for life's imperious tasks.
So all the morning, while the golden hours
Laughed in their happy dance, I chased the midge,
The thistle-down, the purpled butterfly,
And gave no heed to duty. Whisperings
Of solemn import reached mine ears betimes,
But struck not on my heart. So down the long
Bright aisles of airy fancies pleasure bore

My wingéd feet. Till on a sudden fell
The sovereign night, inexorably calm,
With quenching shadows, when no man can work.

A VESPER PRAYER

FROM all its little bells the brook
Shakes out a silver peal,
And faintly from the forest nook
Their elfin echoes steal.
The shadows lengthen on the sward;
The light dies in the west;
Now through the dewy twilight, Lord,
Send down the balm of rest.

The glimmering kine upon the grass
Lie couched in dumb content,
And wandering breaths of blossoms pass,
In one rich perfume blent;
The braided gnats in sweet accord
Wail where the willows weep;
Now through the solemn night, dear Lord,
Send down the gift of sleep.

HIS EARTHLY COURTS

HERE, as the seasons come and pass,
Hope shall uplift her radiant face,
And sweet as dew on parchéd grass
Shall fall God's plenteous grace.

Here hearts, grown weary in the strife
Where trade her noisy mart uprears,
Shall quaff again the peace of life
And rest them from their fears.

The silvern crown of age shall bow
Beside the golden head of youth,
And at this altar breathe the vow
That seals them heirs of truth.

And happy songs shall here outring
From lips that thrill with praises meet;
Her treasures Love shall hither bring
To lay them at His feet.

Blest Church of God! Dear Master, take
Our simple offerings, small and poor,
And while the decades roll, O make
This temple to endure.

Of those the Father gave to Thee,
Thou sovereign Lord, may none be lost;
Thus shall our children's children see
Faith's unimagined host.

"HE BRINGETH THE WIND"

HOWE'ER it come, howe'er it go,
I question not what wind may blow,
Since, whether calm or storm betide,
Serene o'er all still doth He ride
Whose chariot wheels the sun out-tire,
Whose ministers are flaming fire.
Though tossed my fragile bark, the gale
That sweeps me on with tattered sail,
To mariners becalmed mid-sea
The very breath of life may be.
The tempest that uproots the oak,
And rolls the clouds like battle-smoke
From shattered cliff to riven scar
Mid shocks of elemental war,
In yonder cool and claustral wood
But lifts the violet's azure hood,
Where in her hushed, sequestered dell
Like a shy nun she loves to dwell.
And when the bellowing hurricane
Leaps wildly o'er the dark champaign,
Beating as with a mighty flail
Rich harvests down before the hail,
While scattered in its huge, blind wrath
Men's ruined labors strew its path,—

Upon the marge of some clear lake,
The mirror fair of bloom and brake,
White lilies lightly dip and rise,
Asleep beneath the fostering skies.
Thus howsoe'er the wind may blow,
Or be it high or be it low,
I hush my foolish heart to rest;
God sends the winds, and He knows best.

DOUBT AND FAITH

'TWAS thus the vision came: the sunset bars
Were fading from the west, and gathering gloom
Veiled the fair landscape; multitudinous sounds,
Born of the night, from valley and from hill
Rose solemnly. Then saw I where a path
Wound down a steep declivity till all
Was inky darkness, save a single star
That pulsed with brightness o'er the gulf's black void.
Thither two travellers came, and staid their feet,
Affrighted to behold the sheer descent
Whither the pathway plunged. Then was I ware
How one upon his eyes did clap his hands
And leap into the night. The other, calm
With lifted brows and eyes fixed on the star,
Stepped downward bravely, and the darkness fled
Before his fearless feet, and on a sudden
Shining he saw the happy gates of home.

THE SHELTERING CARE

THY spirit, Lord, is on the unquiet deep;
Beyond its utmost metes, which Thou hath set,
It may not pass; though billows foam and rage,
And bellowing winds from the tumultous gloom
Smite the tormented bark, still doth Thy hand
In its wide compass hold the tameless seas
And granite-rooted hills; nor may the floods
That gnash their bodeful fangs round palm-girt isles
Move from its fostering bed one trancéd seed
That yet shall wake to lift to prosperous skies
Its swaying fronds. O Eye that slumbers not,
O Heart whose tender vigil never ends,
Teach me that in the circuit of Thy love
Tempests shall bring undoing unto none,
Even the least of those, whose helplessness
Nestles within Thy bosom's cherishing.
When thunder peals and the stunned heavens split
From side to side, and fiery bolts descend
Full charged with sudden doom, what time the black
Waste midnight shudders into denser night,
Somewhere the light lies still on breathing flowers,
And soft airs stir the violets in green dells,
And birds with pulsing throats break into song
Above the cradled nests. Somewhere the dew

Falls cool on peaceful meadows, and the kine,
Ruminant with content, lie calmly couched
By pasture bars; and all along the vale
Home lights begin to twinkle, and a sound
Mellow and hushed steals through the scented dusk—
A lullaby crooned o'er a drowsy babe.
Lord, whatsoe'er Thou shalt appoint for me,
Or calm or storm, O let me not forget
The world is Thine, and all is well to him
Who trusts Thy patient care. Afar or near,
In dark or light, no hurt shall come to me,
For that my times are in Thy guardian hand,
And by my path Thy warders wait: at whiles,
To me in starry moments there shall come
Low murmurings of celestial voices, borne
On perfumed winds whence deathless summer breaks
Its surf of blossoms round my Father's door.

A CHALLENGE

ARISE, O soul, and gird thee up anew,
Though the black camel Death kneel at thy gate;
No beggar thou that thou for alms shouldst sue;
Be the proud captain still of thine own fate!

ELIM

And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and three-score and ten palm trees.—Ex. xv. 27.

O ELIM, I have sought thee long with tears;
Over the weary desert, day by day,
I've reeled and stumbled, and the sands have parched
My withered flesh. Along the dunes I drag
My leaden feet, and all the dewless skies
Are void of hope or succor. Oft afar
Thy palms have lured me onward, but at last
Have vanished from my sight. At whiles my ears
Have caught the murmur of thy falling streams,
Like music heard in sleep, only to die
In silence as I listened. Yet, ah yet,
I know that somewhere lies thy cooling shade
On tender sward, and flowers nod and smile
In sheltered hollows, and the breath of night
Is sweet with perfume. O thou Guiding Hand,
Wilt thou not bring me thither, ere my strength
Be wholly spent? So shall I come and drink
Of those clear wells whereof my lips are fain,
And lay my burden down, remembering
In the hushed, glad fulfillment of that hour,
No word of Thine e'er lapsed, no promise failed.

RECOMPENSE

TIME steals the damask from the rose,
The wild, sweet freshness from the dawn;
The night forgets to bring repose;
From spring the rapture is withdrawn;
Hope's rainbow, seen of old through tears,
No longer spans the flying years.

Yet hath the heart its quiet dells
Where Memory keeps her bowers green;
Where Peace abides, and Honor dwells,
And faith is glad in things unseen;
Where Love's warm afterglows still lurk,
And Patience hath her perfect work.

ICHABOD

THE glory is departed—imminent night
Wraps her dusk vans about the mountains gray,
Where late the smouldering embers of the day
Glowed with a solemn and foreboding light:
Thus summer's pageant dies upon the sight;
Thus autumn's tragic flush dissolves away;
Thus the dear dreams we fain would keep for aye
Are startled into unreturning flight.
O maimed and stricken life!—the lyric bloom
And dewy freshness—shall these never be
Thy portion more? Drowned in the midnight gloom,
Shalt ne'er again some radiant vision see?
Courage! behind the sullen peaks of doom,
Somewhere God's kindling splendor dawns for thee.

"THE STRENGTH OF THE HILLS IS HIS ALSO"

TAKE thou, O Lord, thy meed of praise;
Life still is good to me;
Beneath the steadfast stars I raise
My tranquil face to thee.

I thank thee for the unwasting strength
Of the age-rooted hills,
Down whose ribbed ledges foams the length
Of the rock-tumbled rills;

For the long-steeped summer hours;
The voiceless hush of noon;
The deep still nights when dew-tranced flowers
Lie wet beneath the moon.

I thank thee for the various life
In cloud and stream and grass—
The frog's bassoon, the cricket's fife,
The flutes of birds that pass;

For the gray mists whose streamers weave,
Above the soaring woods,
Thin airy shapes of vans that cleave
The upper solitudes.

My grateful heart accepts the past,
Its sorrows, tears and scorn,
The burden sore grown light at last,
The long-belated morn.

And so my soul adventures far,
Through pathways wild and sweet,
To come where thine high altars are,
And worship at thy feet.

BEYOND THE MERIDIAN

A LITTLE rest, a little rest, O God!
Ere the long darkness shuts me from the day,
Let me have time to see the morning lay
Her lavish gold upon the hills and, shod
With purple, pass where vestal eve hath trod
The starry lanes of midnight. I would stay
A-near the cool and healing grass, and pray
As prays the violet from the mossy sod,
Taking the rain and sunshine as from Thee,
Scarce conscious that it asks, but glad withal
Simply to live. My tired soul would see
Green buds and fritillaries, and would call
For priest-like nature's benedicite,
Ere death's eclipse upon mine eyelids fall.

THE POTTER'S CLAY

UPON the potter's flying wheel the clay
Knows not the purpose of its plasmic day;
So we upon this blindly-whirling sphere
Are shaped to ends which do not yet appear.

"AND THY SLEEP SHALL BE SWEET"

Prov. iii. 24.

THE end draws nigh; for this I thank Thee, Lord;
The goal at length makes glad my weary eyes;
Hushed are the old wild woes, the last vain word,
Day's raucous cries.

The evening comes, with soothing murmurs blent;
I strove and failed; now twilight whispers, "Rest";
For me the cool grass spreads its shadowy tent,
Earth opes her breast.

Out of the lists I reel—and it is well;
Vanished is pain, with joy that none can keep,
While ancient night weaves o'er me her soft spell
Of dreamless sleep.

So let me lie, while seasons wax and wane,
Careless alike of toil and toil's surcease,
Unheeding winter's cold or summer's rain,
Wrapped round with peace.

POEMS BY DORIS KENYON



THE POOL ON THE PAVEMENT

ALL the long dreary day the sky had wept,
Till o'er the world the night fell hushed and cool;
Then dried its tears—and on the pavement slept
A little pool.

Within its mimic depths the sudden glare
Of swaying street-lamps scattered shimmering beams,
Till in the dark it lay once more and there
Resumed its dreams.

O'erhead the clouds, unsheperded and wild,
Parted and fled to the night-hills afar,
And in the pool's dim sky dawned undefiled
One radiant star.

Anon a flower-decked bride passed on her way,
Her happy face reflected at her feet;
And a night-prowler, like a bird of prey,
Sped through the street,

While glimmered in the pool as in a glass,
The vision of his scarred and evil face,
Then like a vapor vanishing, did pass
And leave no trace.

A drunken mother, cradling in her arm
A wailing infant, staggard slowly on,
Glimpsed in the pool her image with alarm,
Cursed, and was gone.

But now the clouds roll from the sky's vast blue;
The noise and tumult of the city cease;
In the shrunk pool the star shines out anew,
And night breathes peace.

FOREKNOWN

(Lieut. E. B. F., killed in action, France, Sept. 14, 1918)

I DREAMED and I awoke, the morning light
Streamed o'er my bed—it was no longer night.

He died in France, and I was with him, though,
We were three thousand miles apart; for lo!
He called me to him and I saw him die
A hero's death; beside him there I knelt,
My arm beneath his head. He knew I felt
Repaid while sharing his great sacrifice,
In that wild night beneath the alien skies.

I did not need to hear the fatal word
That came at length; already, when I heard
The woful message, it was known full well
That yonder in the awful din, he fell,
Laying upon the altar of his God
The blood wherewith he dewed the shell-torn sod;
And though I miss him, yet my heart the while
Like his is tranquil, for I saw him smile.

THE LIGHT ON THE HILLSIDE

AT night, far up the hillside, faintly shines
A tiny light that trembles like a star;
What lies behind its small, uncertain beam
The dweller in the valley cannot guess;
And yet, perchance, a soul that harbors there
May in some fateful moment touch his own.

Within a humble cottage, by the stream
That threads the lonely vale, a crippled child
Has watched as, eve by eve, the dark draws down
With dusk and dews, the kindling of that light,
And in his simple heart has pictured there
A happy home wherein love reigns supreme.

The Child Speaks

Ah, yonder is that twinkling light again!
My heart is glad to see its little ray
Piercing the dark with tidings of good cheer.
I think that in yon home are sturdy boys,
Not weak like me, but who can run about
And play. Some day when I am big and strong
I'll climb the hill and tell them how they helped
Me in my heart to bear the cruel pain.
Each night before I sleep I pray that God
Will guide and guard them through the coming years,

Making them glad as they have gladdened me,
Though they have never known the ailing boy
Shut in his room, beyond the wide green fields.

Behind the Light—A Wife Speaks

Behind the guttering candle there is one
Who speaks in bitterness: "At last you're dead—
Well, you will never know the poisoned shaft
You've winged into my breast, nor yet the wreck
Of all my maiden hopes and girlish dreams.
I loved you! Hither came I as a bride,
And now you die, unwept and all unloved.
When you fell sick, through the long midnight hours
I watched beside your pillow, hopeless, crushed,
Despoiled of woman's birthright. For I knew
You lacked the wished-for strength to clutch my throat
In a grip of steel, sparing my wretched life
That you might only torture me again.
All this I knew, yet never left your bed,
Of mortal suffering. What held me there,
Until this hour I know not, lest, perchance,
It was some subtle influence that breathed,
"Be strong, love endeth not in nothingness."
Now I go forth into the voiceless dark,
Tearless, alone, yet there is something left
That cannot wholly perish in the night."
Thus who shall say the soul which lies behind
The distant light shall not sometime, somehow
Meet ours and save us with its healing touch.

THE HAVEN OF THE HEART

WHERE the wild waste of waters toss and seethe,
And maddened whitecaps dash against the cliffs,
And the fierce waves round rocky headlands wreath
Their foamy flowers and wreckage heaves and drifts—
She stands at gaze above the angry tide,
Beholding from her crag the laboring bark,
And prays her own may safely reach her side,
As the ship staggers shoreward through the dark.

On life's wide threshold, with meek, gentle eyes,
A maiden stands and looks with half affright
Upon the world's mad ways, the threatening skies,
And the long shadows that forecast the night;
And wonders in her tender heart if he,
Her own true love, will safely win her side,
Bringing to her the treasure that shall be
The crown and glory of his waiting bride.

THE BIRTH OF THE FIREFLY

A DEWDROP trembled on an aspen leaf;
Above, a nightingale
Sent through the dark his first low note of grief,
Across the shadowy vale;

And as that note throbbed on the sentient air,
Wrung from a heart forlorn,
The dewdrop slipped into the dusk, and there
A firefly was born.

THE SELFISH AIM

HE sought it in life's fresh and dewy morn;
In misty woodlands where the shadows lay;
In summer fields amid the ripening corn;
In meadows sweet with hay.

Nor khamsin winds nor winter's vulpine tooth
Could daunt him, nor a thousand anxious fears,
For still he sought the fount of endless youth
Through long and bitter years.

Nor did he find it on the hoary hills,
Among whose splintered crags he toiled in vain,
Where the long thunder rolls and torn cloud spills
Its cold and barren rain.

He sought it by the ocean's tawny sands;
Amid forgotten cities, gray and old;
Love could not woo him with her beckoning hands,
Nor friendship, fame nor gold.

Then to the desert turned his weary feet,
The unattained still luring all his soul,
Till his strained eyes athwart the dazzling heat
Beheld at length his goal.

And there he digged, with heart grown old and seared,
Until he found the spring, when lo! he stood
Ringed round with mountains he himself had reared,
And perished in the solitude.

NAUGHTY LUCILE

O NAUGHTY Lucile, she cam' down from Quebec,
Wis ze cheek lak a rose an' all white on ze neck,
An' she work ver' mooch as a couturière
In ze shop—what you call 'em—ze dressmaker, hey?

Now she save enough monee to buy ze fine gown,
Zen she go to ze Astor fer tea;
She walk up an' down, all ze men turn aroun',
An' zay gasp lak a feesh—at what zay can see.

Oui, naughty Lucile, she mak' all ze men feel
Zat zay 're mebbe in love wis her;
Her lips are lak cherries, her tees are lak pearls,
Her eyes—sacre Dame!—zay're not lak ozzer girls'.

O naughty Lucile, she mak' all ze men feel
Zat zay 're crazee in love wis her;
She saz zat she's dyin' fer love an' fer kisses;
Ze men say, "I'll save her if zat's what she misses."

O naughty Lucile, she mak' all ze men feel
Zat zay wish to mak' marry on her;
Une tres jolie fille, wis ze leetle black curl;
Ah, bon Dieu! but I say she's ze bes' lookin' girl!

THE TEARDROP

A STAR slips softly from the sky,
In the hush of dusk, out of the blue;
It is God's teardrop, from on high,
For He has disappointments, too.

IN AN AIRPLANE

GENTLY the ground sank from me ere I knew;
My heart leaped up as breaking earth's last bond;
The trees in huge bouquets a moment swayed
Like rushes round a pond.
Busy within their pigmy colonies,
Below I saw the toiling human ants—
Then they were gone. Ah! now I know whence come
Our dreams; they dwell where sunrays wink and glance
Among the rose-hued clouds which break away
In fragments, as soft breezes earthward play;
And sailing by, I saw dim forms that knelt
Before an altar like pale nuns in gray.
I was a bird—on pinions wide I swept
Upward, forever upward still I kept;
I felt no earthly fetter binding me,
For I, at last, was free.



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